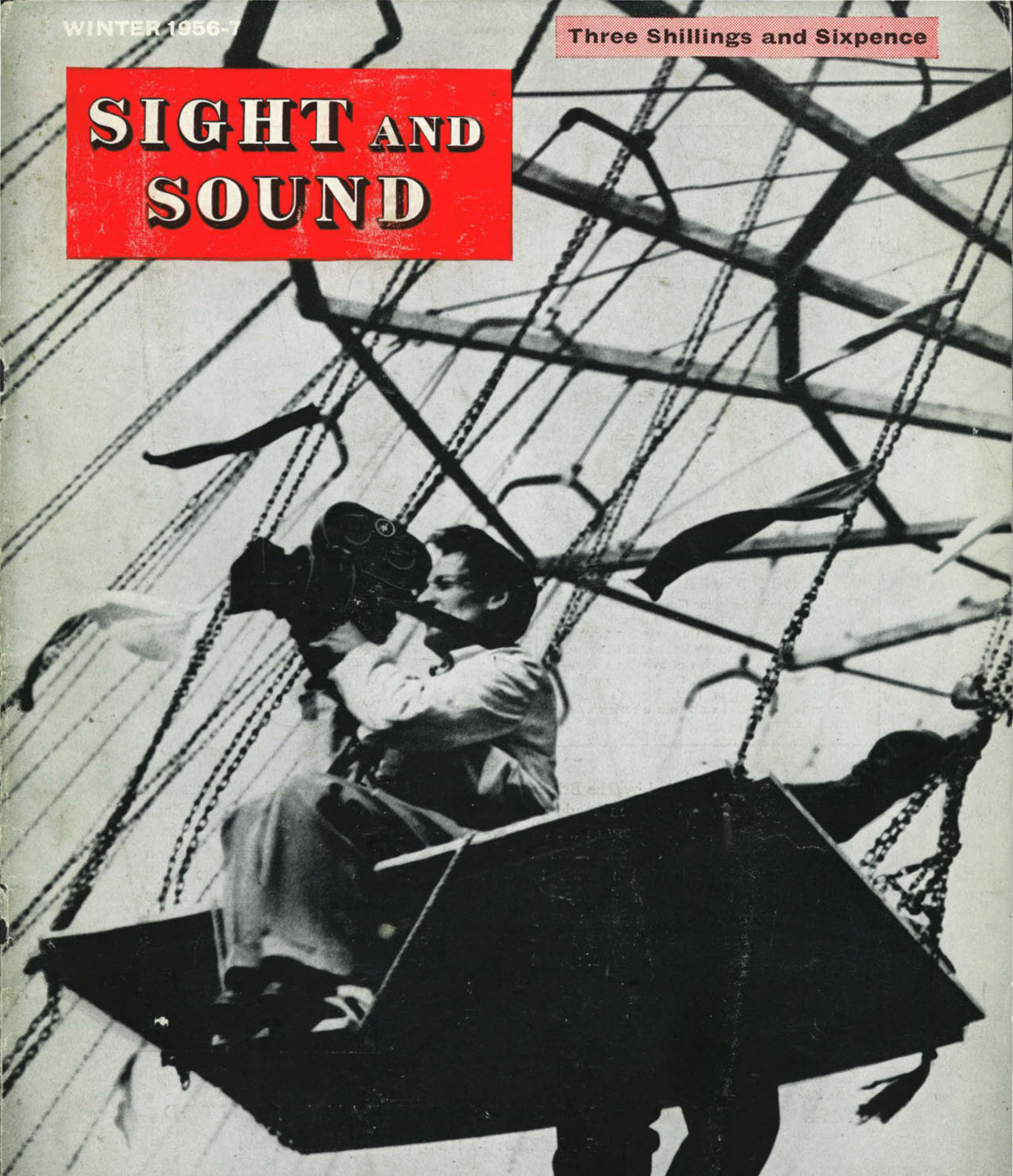


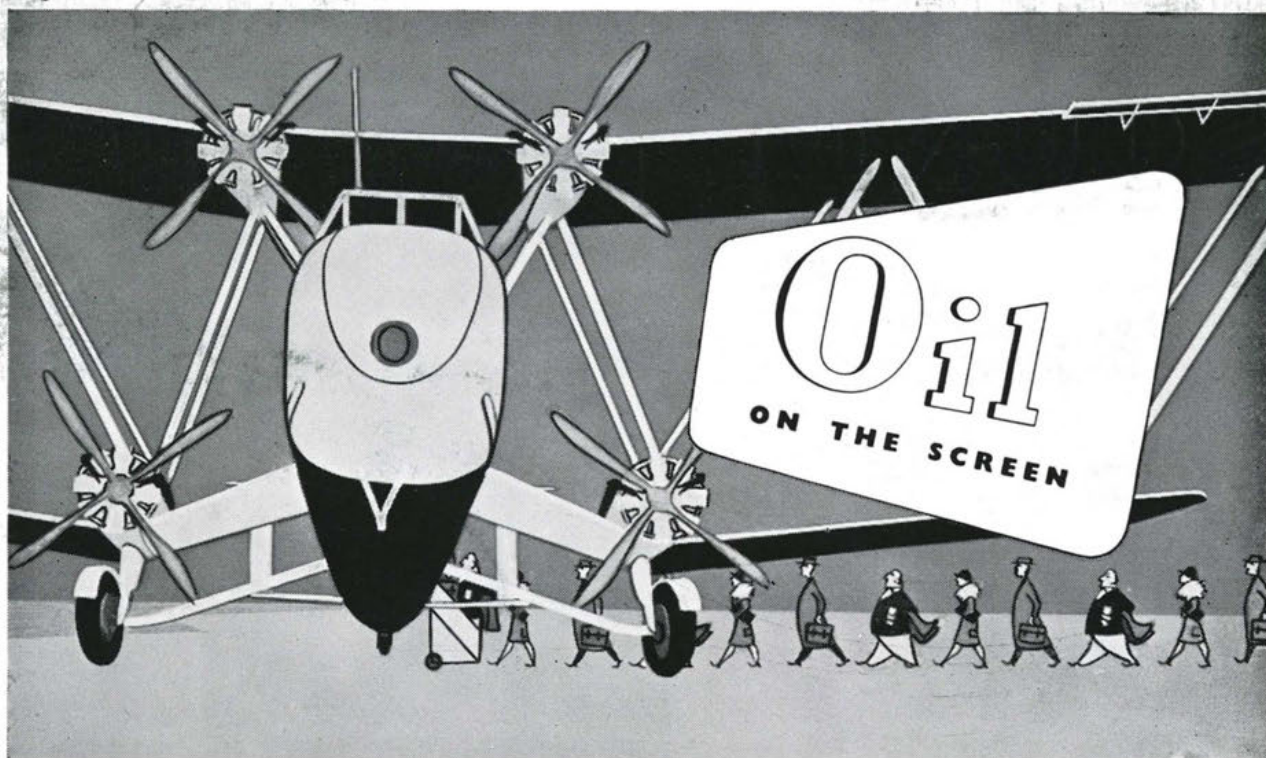
WINTER 1956-7

Three Shillings and Sixpence

SIGHT AND SOUND



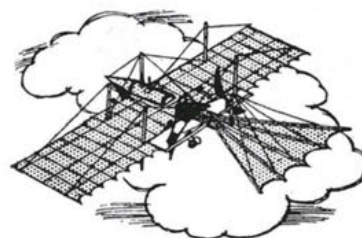
The Film Quarterly



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SIGHT AND SOUND

The International Film Quarterly

VOLUME 26 No. 3 WINTER 1956/57

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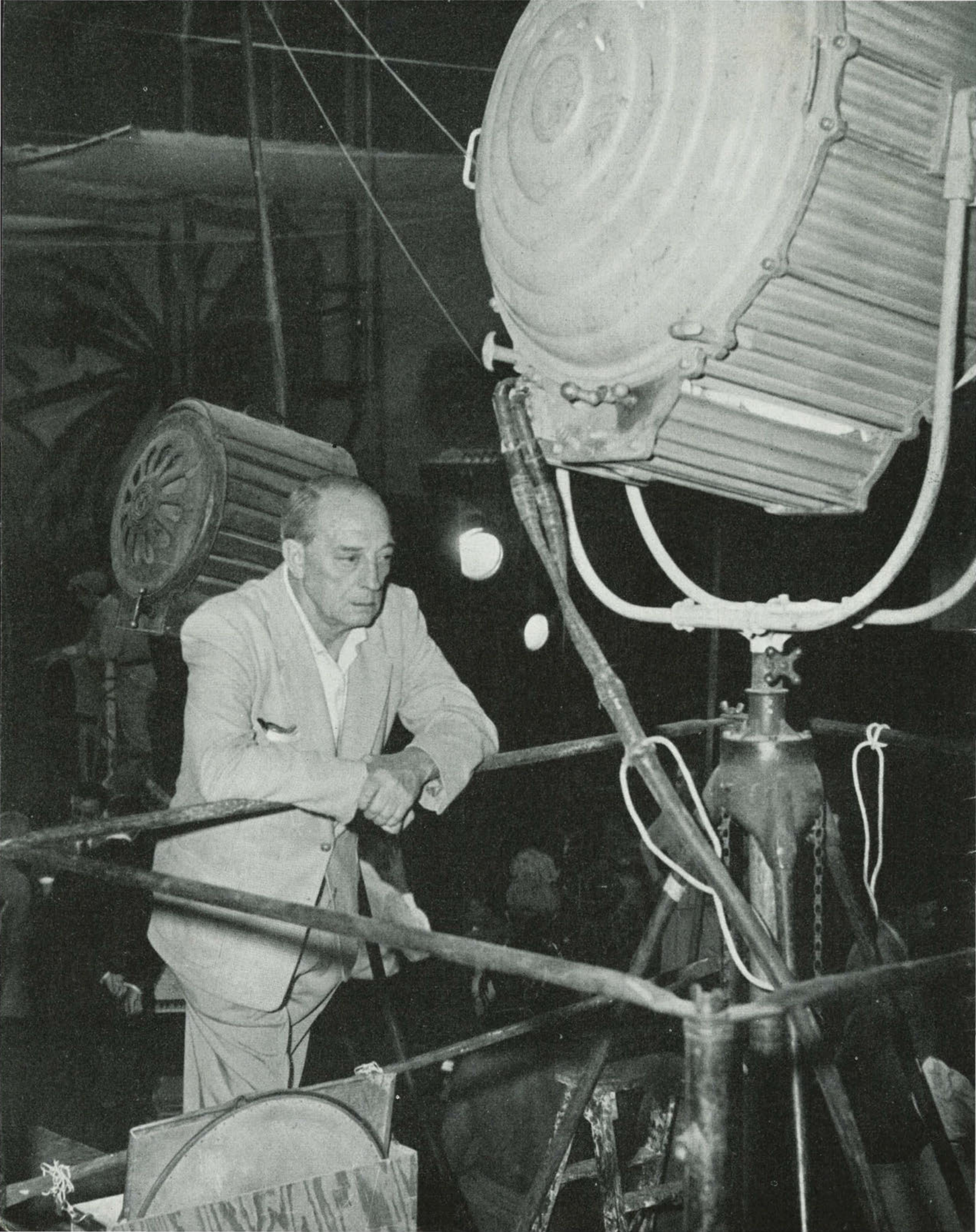
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THE FRONT PAGE

PRESS comment on Lindsay Anderson's article "Stand Up! Stand Up!" in our last issue has been gratifyingly wide-ranging, and interestingly varied in its attitudes. On the part of the Left, the article's political implications have been underlined; from the Right and Centre there has been some slight tendency to regard it, in the words of the critic of *The Times*, as "an artificial exercise carried out for the purpose of testing the reactions of others, an elaborate trailing of the coat". If a coat was trailed, though, it was with wholly serious intentions. Both Press comments and our correspondence columns suggest some misinterpretation of just what is intended by "commitment". It does not mean that the critic should consider all films solely in terms of social awareness, sternly rejecting any picture designed simply to entertain. Mr. Anderson's main point, which we support, is rather that the cinema is a social force as well as an art and an entertainment, that many films (not all) have more to say about our society than the uncommitted critic may admit, and that the ivory tower is no place for the contemporary critic to take up residence.

Also arising out of our last issue, we propose to take up the implied challenge from Mr. John Maddison by undertaking in our Spring number a survey of contemporary British documentary—its products, the talents engaged in it, and the situation in which they find themselves. It is not always easy to keep up with the output of the documentary companies, particularly those films which are not shown to the Press, and we would appreciate any help from companies in this field in notifying us of productions that they consider of particular interest and making these available to us.



1956 has been a somewhat indeterminate year in the cinema as represented here—plenty of worthwhile films, few outright masterpieces, and a general sense that the batteries are being recharged to some purpose. In half-a-dozen countries, a new generation of film-makers has come vigorously to the fore. Satyajit Ray's intensely poetic *Pather Panchali*, an exceptional first film and the year's outstanding achievement, has as yet been seen only at the National Film Theatre. It deserves, and will apparently receive, a far wider audience. Other young, or youngish, directors include Sergei Samsonov, whose *The Grasshopper* beautifully translates its Chekhov original; Michael Cacoyannis, with *The Girl in Black* and the rougher but equally individual *Stella*; Federico Fellini, whose *I Vitelloni* left a much sharper impression than his loose-jointed *Il Bidone*; Stanley Kubrick (*Killer's Kiss*, *The Killing*), an assured, technically skilful director at present somewhat restricted in his choice of subject; and Juan Antonio Bardem, director of the courageous, cold and formally brilliant *Death of a Cyclist*.

Two long-awaited experiments finally arrived in the cinemas during 1956: Orson Welles' perverse, exciting and intensely

individual *Othello*, and *Invitation to the Dance*, Gene Kelly's bold but rather luckless essay in the all-dancing film. Another highly personal picture, Hitchcock's *The Trouble with Harry*, pleased by no means everyone but delighted those who responded to its macabre and drily insolent humour.

Other American films worth recording: John Ford's *The Searchers*, disappointing as a whole but recognisably the work of a master; Nicholas Ray's *Rebel Without a Cause*, a deeply-felt study in adolescent tensions that aroused audiences to a passion of identification; and, for different reasons, the nine-days-wonder *Rock Around the Clock*. The most popular British film has probably been *Reach for the Sky*, the screen biography of Douglas Bader; *Private's Progress* was an amiable army comedy, a sort of military *Lucky Jim*, and *Yield to the Night* a daring but insufficiently resolute case-history of a murderess in the condemned cell. There has been surprisingly little of note from France, beyond Clément's *Gervaise*, a virtuoso exercise in misery and degradation; little from central Europe except *The Last Act*, Pabst's grim, hysteria-tinged reminder of the last days of Hitler; and nothing from the Far East.

In the documentary of exploration, Cousteau's *The Silent World* stands out, backed up by another good Disney in *The African Lion*, by the quietly workmanlike *Foothold on Antarctica*, an account of the outward voyage of the *Theron*, and by James Hill's *The New Explorers*, a capable survey of the world-wide search for oil. UPA have returned to form with two stylish fantasies, *Christopher Crumpet's Playmate* and *The Jaywalker*; there were some neat jokes in the Halas and Batchelor *History of the Cinema*; and Albert Lamorisse scored a brilliant near-miss in his fantasy of childhood, *The Red Balloon*.

Notable performances: James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause*, Ellie Lambetti in *The Girl in Black*, and the pyrotechnic Anna Magnani in *The Rose Tattoo*. Also enjoyable: Melina Mercouri's highly-charged playing in *Stella*, Judy Holliday's attempts to master office routine in *The Solid Gold Cadillac*, Yul Brynner's forceful personality impression in *The King and I*, the relaxed assurance of Brando and Jean Simmons in *Guys and Dolls*, and Alec Guinness's glum Ruritanian prince in *The Swan*.

The National Film Theatre has shown Eisenstein's *Strike* for the first time to British audiences, in a Soviet season which also included Youtkevich's stirring *Othello*, has run an enjoyable and illuminating season of Warner Brothers' pictures, and is at present halfway through an Italian season which notably includes Visconti's two early masterpieces, *Ossessione* and *La Terra Trema*. At the Film Theatre, too, were shown the two Free Cinema programmes—and nothing this year has been more striking than the immediate response from Press and audiences to their call for independence. *Together, O Dreamland* and *Momma Don't Allow* from the first programme, *On the Bowery* from the second, are among the most personal and most penetrating of recent non-fiction films. But the response was not only to the quality of the films but to the idea they represented. All in all, and not only in these programmes, 1956 has been something of a year for non-conformism, for the individual approach.

Opposite: Buster Keaton on the set of *The Buster Keaton Story*, a screen biography in which the part of Keaton is played by Donald O'Connor.

In the Picture

Economic Front

DUNCAN CROW writes: A paragraph in the Queen's Speech confirmed an earlier announcement by the President of the Board of Trade that the Government propose to continue the lending powers of the National Film Finance Corporation, which expire in March, 1957, and also propose to substitute a statutory levy for the present "voluntary" Eady scheme when that lapses in October. The President had added that the exhibitors' quota would be continued beyond its termination in October, 1958; but that, of course, is not an item for the current Parliamentary session. The British film producer, in fact, has every reason to be satisfied. The three methods of assistance developed over the past years to make his existence possible, are to go on.

But while there may be cause for satisfaction, there is certainly none for jubilation. Although details of the proposed statutory levy have not yet been announced, it is to be comparable in scale, apparently, with the present scheme. That scale is proving inadequate and must undoubtedly be increased if the Production Fund, and its successor, are to carry out the purpose for which they are intended.

One thing is certain, however: the industry itself cannot provide increased aid to producers out of its own net takings. Indeed, it can hardly afford aid at all. Faced with the double problem of a very high rate of special taxation in the form of Entertainments Duty and an attendance rate that has declined by almost 20 per cent over the past seven years, exhibitors are reaching a parlous position. The case presented to the Chancellor of the Exchequer by the All-Industry Tax Committee early in 1956 failed to result in any amelioration of the situation. The Committee pointed out that unless there was a substantial reduction in the rate of tax many cinemas would have to close their doors, to the detriment of cinemagoer, industry and Treasury alike.

At the end of June, 1956, there were 4,432 cinemas in operation with a total seating capacity of 4,083,000. This compared with 4,600 (4,221,000) some five years earlier. The reduction was not large in view of the falling attendance rate. But in October the Rank Organisation announced that because of continued losses in many of their cinemas they proposed to close 79 within the next few months. In 1955-56 these same cinemas had paid £455,453 in Entertainments Tax and £316,870 in film hire. By December 1st, 48 of them had shut, victims of the law of diminishing returns. If this rate of closure spreads throughout the industry (and there is every indication that the Rank closures are only the first examples of a definite tendency), then the Government's proposals for continuing protection for British producers will be beside the point. All the arguments for reducing Entertainments Tax have been made time and time again. It is only Government action that can help now.

Paris Notes

LOUIS MARCORELLES writes: Four pictures, all for various reasons eagerly awaited, have opened in Paris since the start of the new film season. First is Jean Renoir's *Elena et les Hommes*, a disappointing and rather confused morality play about the part played by women in the lives of great men and so in the course of history. The film suffers disastrously from its lack of dramatic structure, and from a major casting error in the choice of Ingrid Bergman to play the lead. There is little more to it, really, than a sort of unhappy parody of the director's masterpiece, *La Règle du Jeu*.

René Clément's *Gervaise*, based on Zola's *L'Assomoir*, had

already achieved a reputation through its Venice showing and through a legal dispute which at one time found director and producers in opposition. It is now established as one of the season's chief popular successes. Clément failed to win his point—that the German-speaking Maria Schell should be dubbed by a French actress—but the film suffers less than might have been feared from Miss Schell's rather forced French intonation. This is, in any case, only another element of artificiality in an essentially artificial film. *Gervaise* does credit to Clément's robust and workmanlike talent, but there is a coldness about it, a lack of real feeling for the characters. It seems the work of an increasingly assured but impersonal talent.

La Traversée de Paris, the new film by Claude Autant-Lara, conveys something of the same contempt for humanity. It has the advantage, though, of pushing to its limit in caricature what is known in France as "l'esprit B.O.F." (*Beurre, Oeufs, Fromages*). This is the nickname applied to that section of the middle-class who during the Occupation did well out of the black market. The chief characters in the film, set in Paris in 1943, are two black market operators: one, admirably played by Bourvil, is a simple little crook; the other (Jean Gabin) is an "intellectual", a painter with a taste for low life. Devoid of any generosity of spirit, the film has moments of considerable bitterness. Its anger does not bite very deeply; but it retains, I think, undoubted interest as evidence of a particular episode in French history.

Robert Bresson's *Un Condamné à Mort s'est Echappé*, set at the same time, is essentially an expression of faith in humanity. It is the story of the miraculous escape of a lieutenant in the Resistance who in 1943 was imprisoned at Fort Montluc, in Lyons, under sentence of death. The film's real concern is less with the actual escape than with the individual's lonely struggle in coming to terms with his fate; and the quality of tension it develops might almost be described as "moral suspense". As in *Journal d'un Curé de Campagne*, "tout est grace", Fontaine, the officer, owes his victory not only to his own strength of will but to all those imperceptible forces that to Bresson typify the Will of God. (Borrowing a quotation from the bible, he has subtitled his film "The Wind Bloweth where it Listeth".) The austere, concentrated style, the direction of the entirely non-professional cast, the exceptional use of sound, all confirm Bresson's quality: this film firmly places him among the cinema's great talents.



Judy Holliday and Richard Conte in "Full of Life", a new comedy directed by Richard Quine.



Marlon Brando, made up for his part as the Okinawan interpreter, and Glenn Ford on location in Japan for "The Teahouse of the August Moon".

Italian Notes

ROBERT HAWKINS writes: The Italian film industry is only slowly recovering from a dazed period of crisis which has hit it both commercially (there have been several failures here among major companies) and artistically. Censorship is still sniping at almost all controversially stimulating projects; neo-realism is in the throes of its own crisis (see de Sica's *Il Tetto*, which has received vastly divergent notices); and many film-makers are still torn over the dangerous and useless question (shared, to be sure, with other nations): how can we make our pictures more acceptable to American audiences? Meanwhile, though, film-makers of both the old and new generation remain active.

Antonioni is about to start shooting *Il Grido* (*The Cry*) in the lower Po Valley, from his own script. Interestingly cast (Steve Cochran, Alida Valli, Betsy Blair), it is the director's first attempt at depicting working class life. Fellini is finishing his *Notte di Cabiria* (*Nights of Cabiria*), in which his wife, Giulietta Masina, has created another quixotic character: that of "Cabiria", a prostitute with a child's faith in humanity, who overcomes her life's hard knocks in an optimistic search for a man who will give her true love. Luciano Emmer tackles the subject of painless childbirth in *Il Momento Più Bello*, a doctor-nurse story with documentary flourishes, acted by Marcello Mastroianni and Giovanna Ralli.

Other veteran directors are preparing future projects. De Sica, while accepting parts in almost all Italian films, is to do *Le Bambole* with Gina Lollobrigida and Silvana Mangano, from a script which Cesare Zavattini and Ennio Flaiano have in preparation. Castellani, still cutting *I Sogni nel Cassetto*, should start work soon on *Venere Imperiale*, the story of Paulina Bonaparte. *Salviamo il Panorama*, a long-pending Zavattini project, will be directed in the near

future by Blasetti, while Visconti may return to direction with *The White Nights*, from Dostoevski.

Among the younger talents, both Antonio Pietrangeli and Francesco Maselli are winding up current projects. One hopes that Pietrangeli's *Souvenir d'Italie* (which he accepted after prolonged hold-ups on another project) will prove more than a superficial tourist romp in telling of three girls on a hitch-hiking Italian holiday, with complications. Maselli has re-edited his *Donne del Giorno* to his satisfaction; it should soon be going into release after a lengthy gestation period demanded by the perfectionist methods of Italy's youngest film-maker.

Hollywood's Other Industry

As the barricades between cinema and television go down (all major American companies, with the exception of Paramount and Universal-International, have now come to some arrangement about releasing their pre-1949 product), TV film-making continues to assume increasing importance in Hollywood. *The Hollywood Reporter* lists 30 TV film studios, responsible for about 60 television series programmes, in contrast to the 20-odd feature films currently shooting in the studios. Some of this TV film output is seen on British television (the long-running *I Love Lucy*, *The Burns and Allen Show*, *Highway Patrol*); other series (Warners' *Cheyenne* Westerns, Fox's forty-minute versions of *Calvacade*, *The Ox Bow Incident*, etc.) are shown in cinemas here as supporting features.

Television still borrows much of its talent from the larger screen. *The Loretta Young Show*, *The Gale Storm Show*, *George Sanders' Mystery Theatre*, *Dick Powell's Zane Grey Theatre* are established series. So are *Lassie* and *The Adventures of Superman*. Directors currently engaged on TV series include the veterans Sidney Lanfield, Sheldon Leonard and Lewis R. Foster, and



Simone Signoret (right) in "Les Sorcières de Salem", adapted from Arthur Miller's play "The Crucible". The director, Raymond Rouleau, also directed the stage production in Paris.

among the TV cameramen are Sid Hickox (*Battle Cry, Them!*), Harry Wild (*Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*) and even Ted McCord (*Treasure of Sierra Madre, East of Eden*). The most significant result of increased TV filming, though, remains the virtual eclipse of the second-feature Western. About 15 per cent of the Hollywood TV product is in Western series; in the film studios, the small-scale Western is already something of a rarity.

Press Conference

The highly publicised search for new, untested talent, a favourite Hollywood gambit, not infrequently ends with the studio's decision to employ one of its own contract stars. Sorting through an estimated 18,000 applications, at a cost of some £50,000, Otto Preminger has chosen an authentic unknown, Jean Seberg, for his production of Shaw's *St. Joan*, to be filmed at Shepperton from a script adaptation by Graham Greene. Miss Seberg was introduced to the British press last November, at a gathering whose slightly surrealist atmosphere seemed to be compounded in equal parts of flashbulbs, champagne and publicity hand-outs. A slight, tense 17-year-old from Marshalltown, Iowa, Miss Seberg was interviewed by bustling men with tape recorders and photographed standing in front of a portrait of vague historical significance. She had time to express a few admirations, which included James Dean, *East of Eden* and *The Man with the Golden Arm* (for its "realistic" subject), and to say that she had not read *St. Joan* before the audition. Sitting on small gilt chairs, the press were shown her screen test, which gave little away. Mr. Preminger, cheerful and confident, announced that the film would open in London in June, silenced a faction who thought Siobhan McKenna should have had the part ("You're too conservative—don't you believe in giving youth a chance?") and explained that any new dialogue added by Graham Greene would be limited to "a few bridge passages." He had seen Dreyer's *Jeanne d'Arc* recently, but thought "it doesn't really stand up". He would follow the new film with a version of *Bonjour Tristesse*, then a film about Gandhi. A publicity official handed out biographies of Mr. Preminger

("man with the golden touch") and Miss Seberg ("girl in a million"); the director and his discovery drove off to the television studios; and a French colleague, looking thoughtfully at the milling pressmen round the bar, commented that London did these things with much more dignity than Paris.

Work in Progress

Great Britain

Basil Dearden: *The Smallest Show on Earth*, a story about a small back-street cinema in a provincial town, scripted by William Rose and John Eldridge. With Virginia McKenna, Bill Travers, Margaret Rutherford, Peter Sellers.

Lewis Gilbert: an adaptation of J. M. Barrie's *The Admirable Crichton*, with Kenneth More, Diane Cilento.

Cyril Frankel: *No Time for Tears*, a story about a children's hospital. With Anna Neagle as the matron, Sylvia Syms as a young probationer.

U.S.A.

Rouben Mamoulian: a screen version of *Silk Stockings*, the Cole Porter musical based on *Ninotchka*. With Fred Astaire, Cyd Charisse.

Elia Kazan: *A Face in the Crowd*, from Budd Schulberg's short story *The Arkansas Traveller*, with Andy Griffith and Patricia Neal.

Alexander Mackendrick: *Sweet Smell of Success*, scripted by Clifford Odets from a novel by Ernest Lehman. With Burt Lancaster and Tony Curtis.

France

René Clair: *La Porte des Lilas*, adapted from a novel by René Fallet. With Pierre Brasseur and the singer George Brassens.

Jacques Becker: *Les Aventures d'Arsène Lupin*. Maurice Leblanc's stories adapted by Albert Simonin, with Robert Lamoureux.

Jacques Tati: *Mon Oncle*, comedy about a small boy's relationship with his irresponsible uncle.

Britain in America

RICHARD
ROUD

THE recent crowds at the National Film Theatre for the festival of Rank films would have surprised an American filmgoer. Indeed, a festival of British films on these lines would have been unthinkable at the Museum of Modern Art, the Film Theatre's New York counterpart. (If they ran a festival of British films, they would have shown pictures like *Shooting Stars*, *The Robber Symphony* and *Drifters*.) Not that *The Lady Vanishes*, *On Approval* or *Blithe Spirit* would be unappreciated by an American audience. It is simply that hardly a week goes by in New York when one cannot see most of these films at any one of the small "art" cinemas, or on television. It is not generally realised in English film circles that the double bill made up of *The Lady Vanishes* and *The 39 Steps* is the *Aida* of the American art cinema: whenever the receipts fall because the current offering is not a success, it is taken off and the Hitchcock bill is announced for a two-week season "by popular demand". Even a film that was not perhaps wildly popular in England—such as *Saraband for Dead Lovers*—will turn up on 42nd Street about three times a year, generally coupled, it is true, with a dubbed Italian sex-film. Moreover, certain films are probably more popular in America than in England; *The Ladykillers*, for instance, or *To Paris with Love*.

It is not easy to obtain statistics about the money British films have earned in America, but a lot has surely been made. There are three major British companies distributing films in America, Rank, Associated British-Pathé and British Lion†, and if we consider their greatest successes, and their failures, we can perhaps get some idea of what kind of British film appeals to the American public, before considering what sort of public this is.

2

To begin with the Rank Organisation. Their most successful films in America over the past few years, *Hamlet* and *The Red Shoes*, are atypical cases, in that they were generally released on what is known as a road-show basis: two performances a day only, and with prices approaching those of theatre tickets. Furthermore they were "cultural" films, and as such were seen by people who do not usually or frequently attend the cinema. Schoolchildren and students flocked, or were dragged, to *Hamlet*; schoolgirls and bal-

† Given the differences in methods of distribution, the disparity in the length of time they have been operating, and the amount and quality of the information the companies have made available, the three companies must be treated separately, as any attempt to consider results simultaneously would unavoidably give a false picture of the facts.

letomanes mustered for *The Red Shoes*. (I am not attempting to disparage these films—although as films they certainly left something to be desired—only trying to suggest the kind of audience to which they appealed.)

Rank's other successes, in order of popularity, have been as follows:

*The Purple Plain**, *The Million Pound Note**, *Where No Vultures Fly**, *Doctor in the House**, *The Cruel Sea**, *Genevieve*, *To Paris with Love*, *The Ladykillers*, *The Lavender Hill Mob*, *The Man in the White Suit*, *The Planter's Wife**, *West of Zanzibar**, *The Card* and *Christopher Columbus**.

Bearing in mind that, except for the art houses, exhibitors generally choose a film on the basis of its press-book, its title and, most important of all, its stars, we must subtract from the above list all those films having American stars, if we are to assess the pictures that did well solely on their intrinsic merit. Naturally the exhibitor would buy and could sell to his audience any film with Gregory Peck (*The Purple Plain*, *Million Pound Note*), Claudette Colbert (*The Planter's Wife*) or Fredric March (*Christopher Columbus*). We might also subtract *The Cruel Sea*, which was sold largely on the tremendous popularity of the book in America. It is now possible to make a second, and more meaningful, list of those Rank all-British films that were most popular with American audiences:

Doctor in the House, *Genevieve*, *To Paris with Love*, *The Ladykillers*, *The Lavender Hill Mob*, *The Man in the White Suit*, *The Card*, *Where No Vultures Fly* and *West of Zanzibar*.

All but two of these films are comedies, five of them starring Alec Guinness. In short, what many English critics have long suspected, is true: American audiences like their British films British. They do not, generally speaking, take to British films deliberately designed to suit the American market, unless these have American stars. The two obvious exceptions are *Where No Vultures Fly* and its sequel *West of Zanzibar*, but the Rank Organisation have confided that, although these films did extremely well financially, the higher production costs, the expense of colour prints, etc., resulted in profits no greater than those for the more economical *Lavender Hill Mob*. Furthermore, bearing in mind the enormous costs involved in wide-circuit distribution, Rank have found that a film like *Genevieve*, which ran 17 weeks at the Sutton Theatre (600 seats) in New York, can do nearly as well as the picture that makes a limited circuit run.

* The asterisked titles refer to films which were not restricted to the art houses, but were able to make limited circuit runs.



Low export value: Hollywood influence in the East End. Diana Dors and Brenda de Banzie in "A Kid for Two Farthings".

So much for the successes. What about the films that have not done well in America—the "disappointments", as they are euphemistically termed in the industry? Film organisations are, naturally enough, reluctant to discuss their failures, but the Rank Organisation have been kind enough to tell me of the two films that most "disappointed" them: *Scott of the Antarctic* and *The Blue Lamp*. To understand why these films were not well received in America, it is worth considering the reasons for their British popularity. *Scott* was certainly well received here, but as Mr. Jympson Harman commented, "What you got out of it depended a lot on what you put into it". And what was put in? According to the reviewer in the *Sunday Dispatch*, "Such a film as *Scott* is welcomed at a time when other races speak disparagingly of our 'crumbling empire' and our lack of spirit . . . [This film] makes us believe again that ours is the finest breed of men on earth. And so we are". Naturally, American audiences could not be expected to react in quite the same way, and they therefore felt all the more strongly the film's "kind of flatness" (*Evening News*), its "snowbound humour . . . [and the fact that it came out] as just another adventure story, more monotonous than most" (*Daily Telegraph*). For American audiences, the upper lips were too stiff, the behaviour too gentlemanly; they felt too that "high-mindedness, like patriotism, is not enough" (*News Chronicle*).

As for *The Blue Lamp*, a typical British reaction was perhaps that of the *Sunday Graphic's* critic, who described it as, "Nothing more than a competent and workmanlike film

about the Metropolitan Police. It hasn't the skill, the wit or the tension of *Naked City* . . . its nearest American counterpart". On the other hand, this reviewer went on, "because it has some well-photographed and authentic London backgrounds, because the police have co-operated to some effect with the producers, and because it makes an honest effort to show what a good job of work is done daily by the London policeman, most people will like it very much indeed". And so they did; but in America, where even the concept of the unarmed policeman is incredible, it was found rather bland when compared with *Naked City* and other American "realistic" thrillers. Again the stiff upper lip was too much in evidence: Americans, rightly or wrongly, find this much more congenial when it is on the point of breaking out into a broad grin, as in the firing squad scene of *The Captain's Paradise*. I do not think that they doubt the historical truth of British heroism, but, like many people here, they are not taken in by what Richard Winnington called "Huggetry"—the naive mixture of coyness, patronage and sentimentality that runs through many British working-class films.

3

I said earlier that it is impossible to get any exact figures about how well or how badly British films have done in America. The reason is not difficult to understand. Barring an abortive attempt shortly after the war to distribute films in the U.S. themselves, the Rank Organisation have generally sold their films to American distributors for a flat sum. And the re-distributor has never been very willing to divulge figures of subsequent receipts, perhaps fearing that if Rank knew just how well some of their films had done they might be inclined to raise the flat-rate price. This has been an unsatisfactory state of affairs, and Rank, fresh from their success in South America, have now decided to form their own distribution set-up in the United States.

The Rank Organisation makes about twenty films a year, but just what percentage of these will be deemed "suitable" for the American market is not yet known. In any case, they are also prepared to distribute films produced by other British companies. (Whether other companies will in fact avail themselves of this offer also remains uncertain, and in some cases appears more than doubtful.) Rank feel that British films have not yet been given a fair opportunity in the American market, and to remedy this situation the organisation is prepared to acquire several theatres in New York and elsewhere. As a start, they have taken a lease on the Sutton Theatre, a 600-seat luxury art house in the fashionable East 50's. The first films they expect to release there are *Reach for the Sky*, *The Battle of the River Plate* and *The Spanish Gardener*. More cinemas will be acquired if there is any difficulty in getting adequate outlets, but these will be considered only on "economic" terms. Rank intend to go very slowly, to avoid being caught out as they were in their first American venture.

On the question of whether American artists will be used in forthcoming productions, Rank have gone on record as saying that there will be no change in the existing production policy. Since Rank have already made a fair number of films with American stars, this answer seems slightly ambiguous.

Not all Rank films, however, will be distributed by their American organisation, since their contract with Universal is still in force, and has "many more years" to run. Under

the present system, Rank divide the twenty films made each year into two groups of ten (each group of equal value), with Rank taking one group and Universal having the right to take any that it chooses from its ten. The "split", as it is called, is made in London, on the basis of titles, stories and stars only, and Universal are not shown the actual film. This system may, of course, result in direct competition between two British films in the same American city at the same time—one distributed by Rank, one by Universal. But Rank welcome such competition as a means of keeping their American outfit on its toes. Rank also believe that when they have made a little progress they may get further help from the American motion picture industry. The new plan actually goes into operation about Easter, 1957.

4

At Lion International, the picture is somewhat different. They were organised a year ago, and to date have distributed only three films in America: *Private's Progress*, *Geordie* and *I Am a Camera*. All have been successes. As before, we may set aside *I Am a Camera*, which has been sold on the strength of its popularity as a stage play and on the presence of Julie Harris in the leading part. *Geordie*, to be more accurate, is going to be a success: it is at present only in its third week at the Little Carnegie in New York, but if the review in *Time* is any indication it should certainly be popular. (And, as a matter of fact, while I was at Lion International, a cable arrived stating: "Circuit break possible, send fifteen more prints!") *Private's Progress*, in any case, is an undoubted hit, and since this film was made essentially for the home market its world-wide success has left its producers slightly astonished. So, once more, a British film made with no eye to the American market is doing very well there—and perhaps for precisely that reason. Wisely, I think, Lion are more or less banking on a Guinness-like American career for Ian Carmichael; and since, like Guinness, he is not a British version of Gregory Peck or Jerry Lewis or any Hollywood type, his films will probably cover their costs in the United States alone. Imitations never really do well on a free market; the American exhibitor presented with a choice between Marilyn Monroe and Diana Dors is always likely to take Monroe.

It is interesting to note that one of British Lion's next films will be *Under the Influence*, produced by the Boulting Brothers in collaboration with the American distributing firm Robert Dowling-Ilya Lopert. Although the Dowling-Lopert interest will be substantial, there will be, it is claimed, "no concessions to the American market". Actually, Lopert has agreed with Boulting that the genuinely British film stands a better chance with the growing American audience than those pictures consciously slanted for commercial success on the other side of the Atlantic. On the other hand, and this may be typical of a certain tendency in the industry to "hedge their bets", Lion will also distribute a film called *Manuela*, which, according to their hand-out, is "Strong film fare". "Designed for the international market, with an international cast, it pulls no punches, and is probably the most adult approach to a passionate love story to go into production in Britain for a long time". One can only wish them luck!

High export value: English folkways. Muriel Ake, Joyce Grenfell and Margaret Rutherford in a scene from "The Happiest Days of Your Life".

5

The last of the three major distributing companies is Associated British-Pathé, whose most popular films in America have been:

Mr. Potts Goes to Moscow, *Last Holiday*, *South of Algiers*, *Happy Ever After*, *Happy Go Lucky*, *Duel in the Jungle* and *The Dam Busters*.

Subtracting from this list the films featuring American stars, we are left with only three pictures—*Mr. Potts Goes to Moscow* (*Top Secret* in the U.S.A.), *Last Holiday* and *The Dam Busters*. *Dam Busters* comes as something of a surprise, since the film was vouchsafed only a Brooklyn premiere and was not reviewed in most of the metropolitan dailies. When I asked whether these circumstances had not impeded the film's career in the United States, I was told that the company did not care to discuss the matter. So we must presumably leave it at that. The other two films are, as might be expected, comedies of a very British type. Nevertheless, A.B.-Pathé express somewhat different opinions from the other organisations, claiming that there is no proof that Americans like their British films to be specifically British.

As to distribution methods, A.B.-Pathé have always premiered their films at the art houses, since they believe that the publicity attendant on a successful New York art house showing soon filters down to the small exhibitor in the hinterlands. Considering that this method is also being increasingly used for American pictures (*Marty* and *Lili*, for instance), the company foresee no change in their policy. They have great hopes for their new version of *The Good Companions*, to be released sometime this year.

6

I have talked a good deal in this article about the "art houses", so perhaps I ought to explain just what an art house is, and, more important, who goes to them. This type of cinema is, of course, found mainly in the large cities: New York has about 15, Boston two and a half (one of these goes in for semi-road shows like *Moby Dick* and *The Best Years of Our Lives*), Chicago has two and Washington one.





Smaller cities and university towns (like Cambridge, Massachusetts, Ann Arbor, Michigan, or Madison, Wisconsin) have at least half an art house. The art house is generally small, with about 600-900 seats, but luxuriously appointed. Many have the added attraction of serving coffee (continental blend) free in the foyer. The Paris Cinema in New York (where *The Captain's Paradise* ran for months) has a television set downstairs in case you don't care for the film, or are waiting for it to begin. The Surf Theatre in Chicago used to give away free cigarettes—not by the packet, however; six or seven cigarettes were always tastefully arranged in a little Wedgwood pot on a table in the foyer. These cinemas are generally in the more fashionable quarters: New York's East Side, Boston's Back Bay, Chicago's Near North Side. One of them, the Park Avenue Cinema, a high-flying but short-lived venture, tried to sell tickets on a regular subscription basis; it also offered, for 50 cents more, love seats for couples . . . It has now become a garage.

The Exeter in Boston is, however, the *doyen* of American cinemas specialising in British films. All through the war, and even before, one saw there films like *The Divorce of Lady X*, *Love on the Dole*, and a whole series of spy films starring either Valerie Hobson or Conrad Veidt, or sometimes (*Blackout*) both together. As befits Boston, the Exeter has rather a puritan air about it, due largely to the fact that it is a converted Universalist church. Actually, they still hold services in the cellar, or, rather, the crypt. It was said at the time that Boston was given the American premiere of *Henry V* as a sort of reward for having shown British films so long and so faithfully.

In New York there are one or two examples of the shabbier art house, mainly around 42nd Street. There, no coffee is served and there are no free cigarettes; on the other hand, admission is cheap, the cinema is open from 10 a.m. to 3 a.m., and there are double features—*The Winslow Boy* and *The Mill on the Floss*, or *Miranda* and *Thunder Rock*.

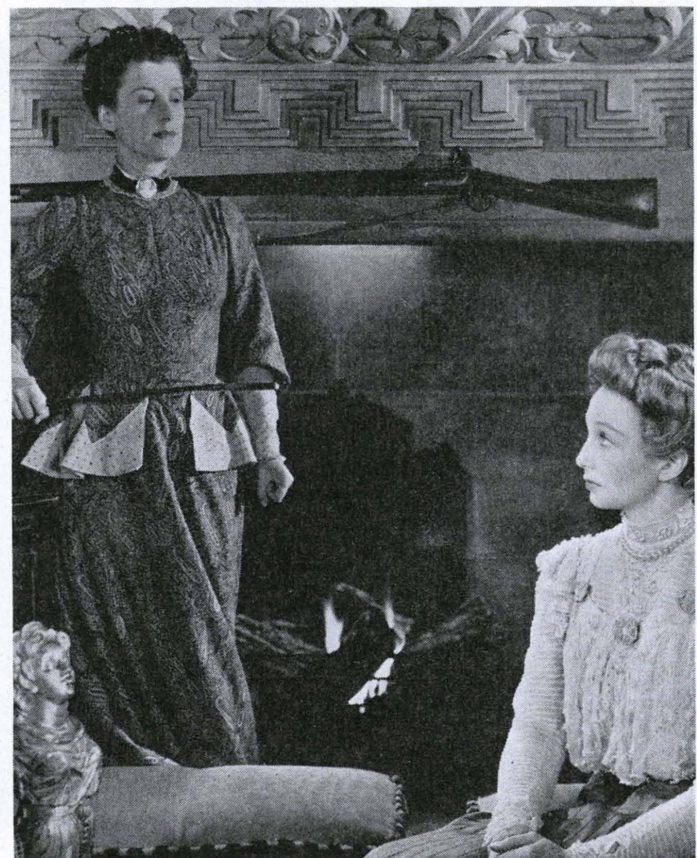
All art houses are not on the same cultural level, and this level can best be determined on the basis not of the main feature but of the accompanying cartoon. The lower sort

have a Tom and Jerry; going upwards, we get first the UPA-Magoo type cartoon, then the UPA-non-Magoo (*13th Dragon*, for instance, or *The Unicorn in the Garden*); approaching the summit, we have a Norman McLaren animated film; and finally, at the top, the cartoon is replaced by an Italian documentary.

Some art houses in New York, such as the Sutton and the Little Carnegie, have shown so many British films that they have become English enough to specialise in long queues along the pavement, even when there are seats available inside, presumably in order to make people think they must have a good film.

Although there seems to be no record available here, many British films do somehow penetrate into the local cinemas. About 1942 I remember seeing *Shipyards Sallie*, a Gracie Fields cockles-warmer, at a local cinema; later another cinema showed (as a second feature) the film about Disraeli with John Gielgud. Still another showed *Major Barbara*, which on a Saturday afternoon caused a great deal of dissatisfaction among the juvenile members of the audience—they had all expected a *war* film, and hadn't bargained on the Salvation Army. Generally speaking, though, it *is* the art houses that show British films.

And who goes to the art houses? Well, nowadays, almost anybody. But in the old days, in the heroic times, it was a small but devoted band that used to go along every other week or so, not so much to see a film as to get the latest instalment in the running saga of English life. This was rather like the way people here used to run to every new Carné film in the 'thirties; and, needless to say, the picture we got of England was just as deceptive as the foggy-porthole view the English got of France. Perhaps a better parallel would be the way Americans used to gather at the New York



"American audiences like their British films British . . ." Above: Bonar Colleano and Sidney James in "Joe Macbeth", the American-style gangster thriller. Right: Beatrice Lillie and Googie Withers in the screen version of Frederick Lonsdale's "On Approval".



"The strongest drawing-card of British films": Alec Guinness, with Joan Greenwood, in "The Man in the White Suit"

docks in the 19th century to get the latest instalments of Dickens' novels straight off the boat—to find out whether moribund Little Nell had in fact died or not. For example, the first time Joyce Grenfell was noticed in some film or other, a whole movement got under way, and her next film was heralded by people telling each other, "Joyce Grenfell's at the 8th Street—in this one she's on for *five* minutes". And as her parts got bigger, with a setback now and then like *Genevieve*, where she went down to three minutes, her supporters became more excited.

To be sure, it was rather a snobbish affair. After seeing *Blithe Spirit*, everyone went around inviting people back to their flats and offering them "Ovaltine that only needed to be hotted up a bit". "I'm just seventeen and I've never been" (*On Approval*) and "The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain" were bywords for a whole generation. But even Margaret Rutherford was finally overshadowed by Alec Guinness (when he reached a wider fame, though, and people began talking about "that Guy-ness fellow" in the subway, he became slightly less O.K.). Perhaps, added to Guinness's undeniable talent, the way in which he incarnated the great American culture-hero of the 'forties (I am referring to Walter Mitty) had something to do with it. In any case,

from *Kind Hearts and Coronets* on, Alec Guinness has become the strongest drawing-card of British films.

But a change has come over the original "happy few". Now that everybody appreciates Guinness, they have taken to liking, in a perversely snobbish way, the lesser English films (when they have not gone over to the Japanese cinema). They have become so familiar with English folkways that films like *The Belles of St. Trinian's* or *The Holly and the Ivy* are greeted with shouts of glee. They enjoy these films as unconscious parodies of other British films: surely a result of their total immersion in British culture, as represented by the screen at least, and a sure proof of their devotion to it.

For the others, the ordinary filmgoers, the long battle with the British accent has at last been won. In the old days, people always complained that they couldn't understand anything anyone said, except for Margaret Lockwood. Now, even Noël Coward presents no insuperable barrier. True, a film like *Private's Progress* occasionally comes along in which, as one Boston critic warned, about four or five minutes are utterly incomprehensible. Nevertheless, they go in increasing numbers; and while it is to be regretted that the word *shower* means nothing to them, they can now understand, and frequently have, a *bloody good time*.

HUNGARIAN CINEMA



"Somewhere in Europe".

The Fight for Freedom

by LOUIS MARCORELLES

Our Paris correspondent, Louis Marcorelles, visited Budapest last August. Impressed and excited by the vitality and sense of purpose shown by a generation of young film-makers whose work is hardly known in the West, he found in many of their films a remarkably direct expression of the national spirit. His article reached us at the end of October—a week after fighting first broke out in Budapest, a week before the second tragic stage of the Hungarian rebellion.

COMING to Hungary from Czechoslovakia, as I did last August after the Karlovy Vary Festival, one was immediately aware of the difference in atmosphere between the two countries—a difference strikingly apparent in their national cinemas. This is not the place to speak of the Czech cinema, with its solid organisation, its state supported industry and its lavish studios at Barrandow. Coming to the modest Hungarian studios after Barrandow (or to Budapest itself after Prague) it was the points of contrast that one chiefly noticed: resourcefulness, improvisation and a free-running imagination seemed to be set against the anonymity of the big factory organisation, the discipline and planning of bureaucracy.

Climate and Tradition

Visiting the studios at Sgyarmat Utca, on the extreme East of Budapest, this was my first impression. Mr. Banyas, the studio administrator, gave me a simple definition of the Hungarian cinema's ambitions: "We would like to establish a bridge between East and West, to use the clear contemporary style developed in the best films from America and other Western countries, but without jettisoning the themes and problems treated by the Soviet cinema during its most glorious periods. We have no wish for an 'uncommitted' cinema in the Hollywood style. At the same time, we reject the extremism and over-simplification that have weighed heavily on the productions of the U.S.S.R. and the peoples' democracies during the past few years. We would like both to entertain people and to instruct them".

Today Hungary is one of the few countries beyond the Iron Curtain where film-makers can rely on a real popular affection for the national product, where foreign films, especially French and Italian, do not hold a distinct advantage at the box-office, as is the case in Czechoslovakia. This perhaps reflects the strongly national feelings of the Hungarian people, who remain closer to their rural and peasant traditions than some of their more highly industrialised neighbours, and whose language splits them off alike from the main German and Latin streams and from the Slav conglomeration. In spirit, Hungary uses the language of the West—that of Bacon, of Descartes and of Croce. But we should also remember the country's recent past, the enforced link with the Austrian Empire. However much that past may now be abominated by many Hungarians, it has left its mark, the traditions of a civilisation founded on elegance, taste and the pursuit of pleasure.

After her long isolation from the West, the result both of circumstances and of Stalinist policy, Hungary is suddenly reawakening to old memories, rediscovering her natural inclinations. Without in any way repudiating a revolution that has permanently transformed the whole structure of the country, she now wants to break free, to avoid any return of those disastrous errors associated with the setting up of the Communist regime. It is the more remarkable that the Hungarian cinema, in its time the most strongly Stalinist in Eastern Europe and the most committed in the cause of "socialist realism", should now be in the forefront of this movement towards a greater ideological freedom. In Poland the new spirit first showed itself, as far as the arts are concerned, in painting and the plastic arts; in Hungary, as a trade union official confirmed to me, the first stirrings of independence were apparent in and through the cinema. The process, a slow and difficult one, has been followed with equal excitement by the intellectuals and the general public.

By treating a subject that showed the corruption of the public authorities, referring to notorious abuses that could not be mentioned in the press or on the radio, the cinema set about criticising, directly or obliquely, the errors of the regime. The Hungarian cinema, however, had been ultra-Stalinist during the bleakest periods of the Cold War, had carried political engagement to the point of adding its own conclusion to de Sica's *Bicycle Thieves*. The film no longer ended on the image of father and son reconciled and becoming lost in the crowd: the new ending showed a threatening march of the unemployed, symbol of the struggles to come. The Soviet cinema, then at its most schematic under the domination of Alexandrov, Guerassimov, Romm and Tchiaourelli, was loudly proclaimed as the only proper model for Hungary to follow. Technicians, both young and old, went to Moscow to study—this at a time when Mark Donskoi was maintaining a voluntary silence and Dovzhenko was subjected to repeated interference in his work.

There were, these Hungarian artists and technicians assured me, only two courses effectively open to them: they could remain silent and inactive, or they could carry out official instructions. Sometimes, almost unconsciously, directors still revert to the style of the worst Soviet films from the Stalinist era (the years, more or less, from 1949-53). Zoltan Fabri's *14 Lives in Danger* (1954), an otherwise realistic account of a mining disaster, introduces a *deus ex machina* in the form of a party official, omniscient and imperturbable, puffing calmly at his pipe like Stalin himself in *The Fall of Berlin*. At the end of *Springtime in Budapest* (1955, directed by Felix Mariassy), some model Soviet soldiers, the contemporary knights in shining armour, suddenly make their appearance; and again a fine film sinks to the depressingly unconvincing level of a *Fall of Berlin*. (This film, some sequences of which were supervised by Stalin himself, remains perhaps the quintessential example of the Stalinist cinema in action.)

Both Fabri and Mariassy now readily admit the over-simplifications in such episodes. And in explaining how honest creative artists could be guilty of such excesses, I believe we must take into account not only external pressures but the persistence of a kind of collective psychosis built up during those years of fervent admiration for Stalin and the U.S.S.R. It is difficult for us in the West to appreciate where genuine admiration stopped and blind servility began: certainly the Stalinist myths were generally accepted and enormously influential. We may remember, too, that Hungary had experienced her own little Bolshevik revolution in 1919. Thirty years later she was in a sense on her mettle, eager to prove herself more Stalinist even than Stalin's Russia.

It would be too easy to pretend that all these negative elements from the years 1949-53 were suddenly given a positive charge, that the creative energy so long held in check exploded violently at the first relaxation of pressure. But the fact remains that the Hungarian cinema has been moving rapidly, with the impatience that has characterised the country's whole political evolution, towards a rediscovery of its freedom, its right to criticise. Its development is closely linked with the immediate political situation; and this cuts it off to some extent from us in the West, who cannot share the same problems. This is a national cinema that directly reflects the spirit of the time. It is, in a word, "committed"—and this not only because it is a socialist cinema. In its modest way it speaks for the people, as did the various national theatres of Central and Eastern Europe during the



Kucsi, the small boy from "Somewhere in Europe" in "Pioneers", the banned film directed by Karoly Makk.

last century. Czechoslovakia has experienced nothing of this advance; Poland (which has gone so far in other directions) remains cinematically backward, while in a country like Bulgaria the attitude still remains strongly Stalinist. This gives the Hungarian cinema a certain exemplary quality: it has the chance, circumstances permitting, to become an authentically national art, to achieve, if the expression is not too much of a paradox, a sort of Marxist humanism.

2

The Hungarian industry was in a position to benefit from this cracking of the ice of Soviet ideology: its film traditions were already established and nationalisation had provided a firm economic framework. Before the war, Hungary was already turning out about eighty features a year—"lemonade films", as they were often nicknamed, because of their artificial atmosphere, their synthetic sparkle. These were shown both in the home market and in those neighbouring countries having Hungarian minorities. Felix Mariassy, who first worked in the studios shortly before the war, assured me that there were advantages in this kind of prolific film-making, which obliged directors to work cheaply and quickly. Ivan Szöts, himself the spiritual father of the Hungarian cinema, regards one film from this period as the first national production of real quality—*Hortobagy*, directed by the Austrian George Hoellering.

In 1942 Szöts himself made *The Men of the Mountain*, accepted by most Hungarians as their first authentically national film. Seen today this appears a solid and heavy melodrama, very theatrical in style, but saved by a full-blooded extravagance which gives some episodes an almost epic quality. Georges Sadoul, in his recent book *Le Cinéma*

Pendant la Guerre, rightly comments on the film's strongly regional character. To the Hungarians it remains a key film, a striking contrast to the "lemonade" that had been flowing so freely from the Budapest studios. It is their equivalent to Visconti's *Ossessione*, shot at the same time in Italy but charged with a meaning very different from Szöts' visionary mysticism.

A Socialist Cinema

The decisive factor in the Hungarian cinema's development was the nationalisation of the industry, carried out by progressive stages between 1945, the date of national liberation, and 1949, when the Communists came to power. In Russia, a nationalised industry had been responsible for the explosive work done by Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Dovzhenko, as well as for the tedious rubbish turned out by directors like Alexandrov and Tchiaourelli at the height of the Cold War. Everything depends on the practical working of the system, the character of the government in power and the way in which officials carry out its orders. Coming at the height of the Stalinist period, nationalisation was bound to turn the Hungarian cinema into an instrument of ideological coercion. Some months after Stalin's death, however, the anti-Stalinist leader Imre Nagy returned briefly to power, and Hungary then became the first of the peoples' democracies to embark resolutely on a course of "destalinisation". Working cautiously and within the existing framework of the nationalised industry, the cinema played its significant part in this movement.

There was, though, a great deal of ground to make up. Immediately after the war, at the time of the four-party coalition between the Communists, Social Democrats, Smallholders and National Peasant Party, film production was shared equally between these four groups. With Communist domination, the cinema inevitably became the tool of a single party and was subjected to a rigorous political censorship that admitted of no deviations. As a final examination after his course at the School of Cinema, the young director Karoly Makk was assigned to a film about the "pioneers" (the Communist equivalent of our Boy Scouts). Unfortunately the boys who had not yet joined the pioneers—boys shown playing happily at Red Indians—appeared a good deal more lively and sympathetic than the poor little pioneers themselves. As a result, the film was stopped within two days of the end of shooting, and the young director had to earn his living for the next six months driving a farm tractor.

This powerful and insidious censorship also affected imported films (as in the case of *Bicycle Thieves*), and until recently an elderly lady of a distinctly puritanical temperament firmly enforced the strictest moral standards. Felix Mariassy's charming film *A Little Glass of Beer*, shown with great success at last year's Karlovy Vary festival, suffered notably from the conditions imposed by this Hungarian Mrs. Grundy. Among other things, the original script was altered to remove any suggestion that the young hero and heroine have had an affair before their marriage. As Judith Mariassy, who scripted her husband's film, said to me with a smile: "Socialist morality is sometimes the most prudish in the world". But, she added, these petty restrictions now belong to the past. "The easing of the political situation, and the success of our films at international festivals, has forced the hands of the most intolerant".

All film projects are put before an artistic council made up of a dozen members—directors, artists, and also the studio's "political advisor". This last, a Party member, is supposed to supervise the film's ideological content; and with the more liberal tone, his role has been considerably reduced. I met a cheerful young man who seemed mainly concerned to appear as inconspicuous as possible. He has succeeded the former censor, now returned to her university work. "In fact", one

official told me, "you can now do practically anything you like, provided of course that you don't openly preach the overthrow of the regime".

The completed film is again shown to the artistic council, who can suggest modifications. Discussions would appear to be very friendly, the criticism being for the most part genuinely constructive. There is no longer any question of sacrificing human feeling to the tractor or the pneumatic drill or to a glorification of the party bosses: the concern is with films which respect the artist's personal vision and at the same time have the broadest popular appeal. All the directors I met in Budapest, whether or not they were Party members, shared the same determination to make some positive statement, to tackle subjects of collective importance. They are too deeply involved in contemporary issues to want an escape from reality in their work.

2

The Budapest studios, at which Alexander Korda and Michael Curtiz started their film careers thirty years ago, are old-fashioned and desperately short of new technical equipment. (They have had magnetic sound recording facilities only in the last two years, and have only five cameras, all dating from before the war.) In spite of this and of the illusory promises of the "plan", which has as yet produced nothing in the way of new building or equipment, Hungary has managed to lay down the foundations of a future cinema. She puts her trust especially in the young, and it is not simply by chance that the average age of the major directors is between 35 and 40. The film-maker here has greater material security, fewer worries about his own immediate future, than his colleagues in the West, though it should be noted that a system which reduces the emphasis on personality may also act as an encouragement to mediocrity. Everything, again, depends on the policy laid down from above: the director can be merely an anonymous executive, or he can receive opportunities seldom afforded to Western film-makers.

After a five year course at the Institute of Theatre and Cinema (which also trains actors and a variety of film technicians), the young director is given his first chance in the studios. He receives a starting salary of 1,200 forints, the minimum living wage in Hungary. After making a short film, which he both writes and directs, and provided that the studio administration confirms his agreement, he is established at a monthly salary of 2,500 forints, which he receives even when unemployed. After his first feature his salary rises to 3,500 forints. (The forint, at the recent tourist rate of exchange, stands at 65 to the pound sterling.) Each year only a few graduates, two or three at most, come from the Cinema School, and competition for admission is always very keen. This, though, is not the only route to success in the cinema. Karoly Makk, who came from the school and now lectures there on direction, commented to me: "You can't teach talent!" And with the exception of Makk, the youngest of the major directors, the best of the present generation of film-makers started their careers either on the floor or in the cutting room.

Creative Talents

The fall of the Horthy regime, and the establishment of a new social system, found their immediate echo in the young Hungarian cinema. Bela Balazs, the celebrated film theorist, was able to return to his country after years of exile. His extreme preoccupation with aesthetic principles was in fact reflected to some extent in the first important post-war

"Georges Dandin": a scene from Zoltan Varkonyi's adaptation of the play by Molière.



Zoltan Fabri (left) at work on "Mr. Hannibal".

production. This was *Somewhere in Europe*, made in 1947 by Geza Radvanyi. The film, which owed a good deal to the Soviet *Road to Life*, already indicated the lines along which the post-war Hungarian cinema would develop: on the one hand, there is the determination to come to grips with contemporary reality; on the other, there is a taste for formal experiment which in this case bordered on affectation.

Another strong aesthetic influence was that of Pudovkin, who felt a special sympathy for the Hungarian cinema and visited Budapest several times between 1947 and his death. Through the joint influences of Balazs and Pudovkin, *montage* will always hold a place of honour in the Hungarian cinema. (In the Soviet Union, since the coming of "socialist realism", it has generally been regarded as a relatively unimportant factor.) Radvanyi left Hungary soon after his film achieved its world success, but has since done nothing of comparable quality. There are some obvious reminders of his collaboration with Balazs, though, in *L'Etrange Desir de Monsieur Bard*, made in France in 1953 and probably the best of his later films.

Two years later, after the Communists had assumed control, Frigyes Ban made *A Piece of Land*, regarded by most Hungarians as their second great national film (the first, of course, was *The Men of the Mountain*). Concerned with the peasant revolt against the landowners at the time of Horthy's dictatorship, this was an impressively direct and humane study of a tradition-bound people engaged in throwing off the last





Marianne Krencsey and Miklos Gabor in "Ward No. 9", Karoly Makk's film with a hospital setting.

traces of a long oppression. Ban could never repeat the success of this film, and his star has paled considerably during recent years.

At the same time, Ivan Szöts collaborated with Balazs on *The Songs in the Open Fields*, a film made on behalf of the Peasant Party. The survival of traditional superstitions among the peasants (communities little concerned, apparently, with the demands of production schedules) was here described through a fanciful and slightly absurd plot. This handicap did not prevent the film from achieving some stirring and intensely lyrical passages. The Communist censorship, however, banned it out of hand for "reactionary tendencies" and it was never publicly shown.

Stones, Castles and Flowers, a half-hour film recently made by Szöts after seven years voluntary silence, seems to me the most brilliant example of his essentially poetic talent. It received disappointingly little attention at the last Venice festival, where it was awarded a minor prize for its attractions as a tourist film. In it Szöts takes us to a little mountain village dominated by a ruined castle. Through images that are essentially simple and uncluttered, accompanied by a sound track which makes fine use of themes from folk music, he describes the unchanging pattern of existence in a remote mountain community. This remarkably pure impression of the traditions of a people has a quality almost reminiscent of Dovzhenko's *Earth*.

Szöts exercises a certain aristocratic domination over the Hungarian cinema. Something of a visionary, and described to me by one of his younger colleagues as a "great amateur", he belongs to that school of directors who refuse to accept any limitations in their chosen medium. It seems paradoxical that this artist, whose closest French counterparts are the writers Jean Giono and Charles Maurras, should have found the opportunity for self-expression only in a Socialist society. He is at present working on a period film, set at the end of the last century and to be played by children.

2

There seems to be a fairly sharp division between what may be called the pre- and post-1950 generations of filmmakers. At present the cinema is in the hands of relative newcomers, men who are involved in their country's social and political system, who are anxious to criticise recent enormities, and who believe that it is through such honest

self-criticism that their society must advance. At their best, their films express a confident belief in ideological tolerance, in the rights of the individual.

Zoltan Fabri, whose *Merry-Go-Round* scored a considerable success at Cannes last year, is the only member of this generation known at all in the West. Coming to films from the theatre (he was set designer, actor and on occasion producer at the National Theatre in Budapest), Fabri now works only in the cinema. He freely admits the enormous impression made on him by Welles' *Citizen Kane*, which he has seen at least 24 times. In his own films, Fabri is concerned with achieving absolute naturalism in his players' interpretations, and likes to develop his stories with an almost mathematical precision. Leaving nothing to chance during shooting, and attracted by passages of visual bravura, he might well descend into formalism, the pursuit of style for its own sake, were it not for his flair for atmosphere and exceptional skill in handling his players. *Merry-Go-Round* retells the eternal story of *Romeo and Juliet*, the Capulets in this instance standing for private property and the Montagues for collectivisation. It is remarkable especially for a wonderfully fresh performance by an 18-year old actress, Maria Törocsik, with no previous dramatic experience.

Fabri's new film, *Mr. Hannibal*, was due to open in Budapest last October. In it he attacks a more ambitious subject—the right of the individual to do battle alone for what he regards as *his* truth. Based on a novel by Ferenc Mora, one of the leading Hungarian writers, the film tells the story of a little Latin master who makes a sensational discovery concerning the death of Hannibal. As a result, he finds himself promoted and becomes the tool of an unscrupulous careerist politician. (Fabri has advanced the action by a dozen years, shifting it from the early 'thirties to the time of Horthy's dictatorship.) Pressure is put on the little schoolmaster, when the authorities decide that his revelations are dangerous, and at a public meeting Hannibal finds himself confronted by a fiercely hostile mob. Weakening momentarily, he recants and is acclaimed by the crowd. Sickened, Hannibal runs away and falls to his death, a victim of mass hysteria.

The film's limitations, its rather over-dogmatic approach, are already apparent in this outline of the story. Fabri let me see his film at the rough-cut stage, and it perhaps shows rather too obviously the influences both of Chaplin's *Great Dictator* and of Lattuada's *The Overcoat*. His central character is firmly established in a realistic social setting, but Fabri has made the man himself too much of a caricature, has pushed symbolism to a point where it begins to damage the real truth of his situation. The film, though, has undoubted quality; and its subject—honesty versus corruption, the individual versus authority—in its context demands respect.

3

More characteristic of the Hungarian cinema's "committed" approach is Zoltan Varkonyi's *The Bitter Truth*, which I was also able to see in a rough-cut version. It is worth giving the story in some detail, since this seems a direct expression of the post-Stalinist temper, the free spirit of criticism. A prisoner is released, after serving a four-year sentence without any charge being made against him. He finds that his wife has meanwhile remade her own life, leaves her again, and later encounters an old friend, works manager on a construction project, who offers him a job. The ex-prisoner soon finds himself facing a crisis of conscience, when he realises that his friend is disregarding safety regulations and risking his workmen's lives in order to complete the job more quickly. In due course some scaffolding collapses, and men are killed. The works manager "frames" his friend, who is held responsible for the accident and re-arrested. But the workmen turn against their chief, and a symbolic last shot shows him standing outside his house calling despairingly

after his dog—a dog with the significant name of “Nobody”.

For the Hungarian public, as for popular audiences generally, nothing can be left equivocal: here the honest man goes to prison, while the scoundrel remains free. But Varkonyi has not stressed the obvious “meaning” of his subject to the extent of distorting his characters. The works manager, for instance, is a man of great vitality, capable of acting generously, but driven by circumstances into a shameful course of action. The part is played by Ferenc Bessenyei, an actor of Wellesian calibre who recently made a sensationally successful appearance in *Othello* at the National Theatre. The film has plenty of undertones for Hungarian audiences. Everyone knows the story of the Budapest underground, which was to be as splendid as Moscow’s and to bring glory to the regime. Experts warned against building on the swampy ground near the Danube, but against their advice millions were sunk in the scheme. Then disaster followed, when houses caved in and many people were injured.

The Bitter Truth is both a significant document and a remarkable film. Its director, Zoltan Varkonyi, is temperamental, immensely energetic, and by reputation one of the finest actors on the Budapest stage. Dividing his time between theatre and films (he recently played the leading part in a production of Sartre’s *Nekrassov*), he embarked about a year ago on a somewhat curious undertaking, a screen version of Molière’s *Georges Dandin*. Molière is

regarded in Hungary almost as a national playwright, and it was generally feared that the film would turn out to be a disastrous travesty of the original. In fact, it struck me as one of the best adaptations of a classic that the cinema has ever given us. Varkonyi, like Fabri, pays particular attention to the direction of his actors. Technically, he likes to use sustained long takes, with occasional sharp tracking shots, and to keep his players constantly on the move within the frame. It is interesting that *The Bitter Truth*, whose theme has points in common with that of *Mr. Hannibal*, would have been filmed two years ago by Fabri if the censors had not then intervened to stop production.

The films made by Felix Mariassy are less directly related to the contemporary situation. Delicately observed, usually rather slow-moving, and finely atmospheric, their texture approximates generally to that of the novel. The son of a Hungarian aristocrat (his real name is von Mariassy), the director went through a variety of jobs in the studio before specialising as an editor. Curiously, he seems now to have developed an acute distaste for the tricks of editing, which he uses considerably less than a director like Fabri. Mariassy’s finest work (and perhaps the Hungarian cinema’s greatest achievement) remains *Springtime in Budapest*, which was inspired in part by his own experiences and those of his leading actor, Miklos Gabor, during the terrible months before the liberation of the city in 1945. The atmosphere of

Laszlo Ranody’s “Discord”, shown last year at Cannes, is the story of a young schoolmaster in pre-war Hungary who learns to identify himself with the cause of the exploited peasantry.





"Mr. Hannibal".

the time is here re-created with shattering immediacy: the queues outside every food shop, the strain of life under the constant threat of attack (the Russians occupied one bank of the Danube, the Germans the other), the individual's struggle for survival. The most moving part of the film is its love story, involving Gabor, as a Hungarian deserter, and Zsuzsa Gordon, as a young Jewess hunted by the Gestapo. One love scene in particular captures the quality of emotional tension, the sense of a momentary happiness at the centre of war, that Hemingway achieved in *A Farewell to Arms*. The censors were troubled by this sequence, which was criticised as being both daring and pointless (the film had in fact been commissioned to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the liberation). Mariassy managed to retain the scene, but consented to the contrived and ludicrous ending already mentioned—and in the light of the recent tragedies in Budapest, the appearance of these wholly implausible Russian soldiers seems the more unforgivable.

Although his recent film, *A Little Glass of Beer*, does not equal *Springtime in Budapest*, it confirms Mariassy's position as a director of unusual taste and sensibility. The film presents a direct, unvarnished but essentially sympathetic picture of the middle-class youth of the capital, of a generation as vociferous, as uncertain and as greedy for life as their counterparts in Paris or London. One of the film's most charming scenes is that in which the young lovers linger in the porch of the National Museum (now destroyed, unhappily, in the recent fighting) and are gently chased away by an old porter. Mariassy's artistic credo seems faithfully to reflect the beliefs of this whole generation of Hungarian film-makers: "You cannot remain indifferent to events. It is impossible to be a passive onlooker, and you must take action on one side or the other."

Mariassy, Fabri and Varkonyi are all Party members. Karoly Makk, however, like most of his fellow-citizens, remains outside the Party. It seems the more surprising that his films should raise so sharply some of the particular problems affecting a socialist society. When I mentioned this to him, however, his answer was: "These are simply human problems: they should concern all honest men". After the unlucky film about the pioneers, it was some time before Makk had the chance to make another feature. He worked as an assistant to both Varkonyi and Mariassy, and was then assigned as Fabri's co-director on *14 Lives in Danger*. After a disagreement on the style of the film, however, Makk decided to withdraw. His first real chance came two years ago with a screen version of *Liliomfi*, most popular of the Hungarian operettas, which was shown at Cannes in 1955 and very well received by the press. I have no particular liking for this sort of filmed operetta, with its extreme reliance on stage styles and conventions. But Makk's most striking qualities as a director—his sense of humour and his command of screen timing—were already recognisable here. They became more apparent in his second film, *Ward No. 9*, in which the leading parts were played by his wife, Marianne Krencsey, with Gabor and Ivan Darvas, the Stewart Granger of Hungary.

The theme of *Ward No. 9* is unoriginal enough: a crisis of conscience played out against the setting of a big hospital. A young workman is admitted, and watches the activities of the staff from his hospital bed; private dramas develop, notably an affair between a doctor and a nurse. The girl (played with great sensibility by Marianne Krencsey, an actress rather resembling Barbara Bel Geddes) commits suicide after discovering that she is pregnant and that her lover intends to evade his responsibilities. This suicide scene, in fact, is the film's most directly impressive episode: using no tricks of editing, rejecting the help of background music, Makk has made it a starkly tragic impression of a woman bitterly recognising defeat. The film treats the medical profession none too kindly (the doctor is guilty of professional negligence in treating the young workman; the hospital director is more concerned to win official approval than to improve conditions for her patients), and it encountered some opposition from the Hungarian medical association.

Makk has recently finished a new film, *Football Pools*, about a group of people whose whole attitude to life is affected when they believe they have won a big prize. When it turns out that the prize is in fact only a minor one, this shattering of illusions brings out their particular strengths and weaknesses of character. The situation is again a predictable one, familiar from many French and American films, but it would be unfair for this reason to prejudge the film. I was able to see only the second half, which gives further evidence both of Makk's quality as a director and of his tendency to slur over some of the more disagreeable aspects of reality. There is something about this unshakeable optimism that reminds one a little of the pre-war American cinema.

Other films (such as Laszlo Ranody's *Discord*, shown last year at Cannes), provide additional proof of the close links between the Hungarian cinema and the country's political situation. These films are remote from us only in language, and the best of them (I am thinking especially of *Springtime in Budapest* and *Ward No. 9*) should certainly appeal to Western audiences. They show an accomplished narrative style, a liking for clarity of expression, and beyond that they have their own strong concern for truth and reality. The Hungarian film-maker is more than a story-teller and more than a propagandist: he is a man of taste, and he is also a man of conscience.

NORMAN MCLAREN
(right) working on "Rhythmic", his animated mathematical table.

JOHN HALAS
(below) with sketches for
"Animal Farm".

JIRI TRNKA
(below, right) constructing
a puppet. From the Czech-
oslovak short film "Jiri
Trnka's Puppets".

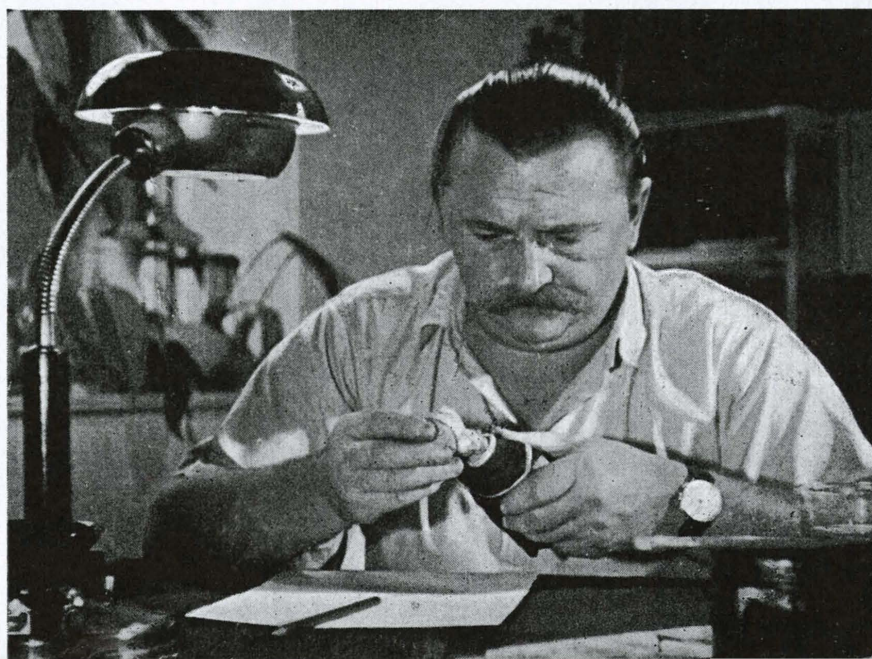
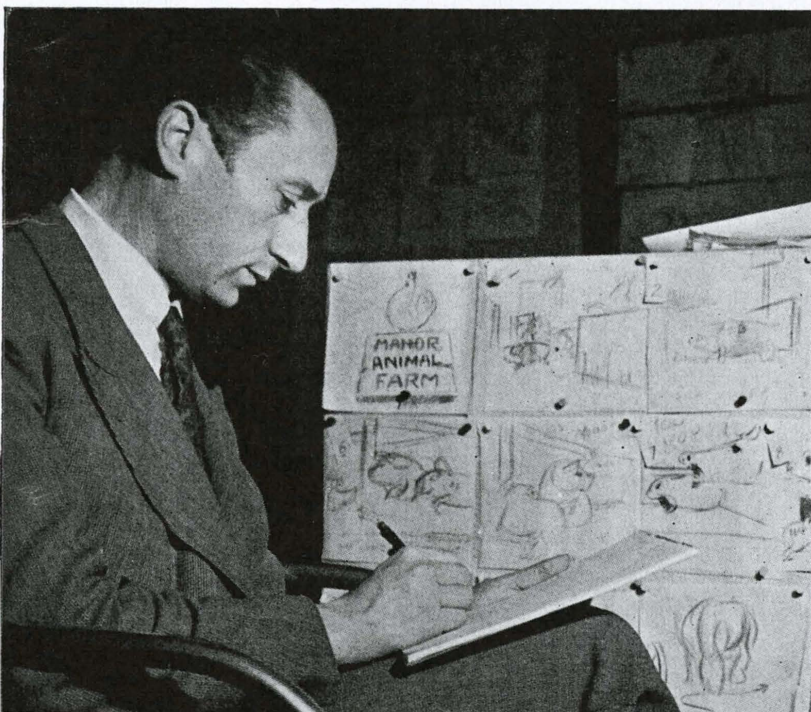


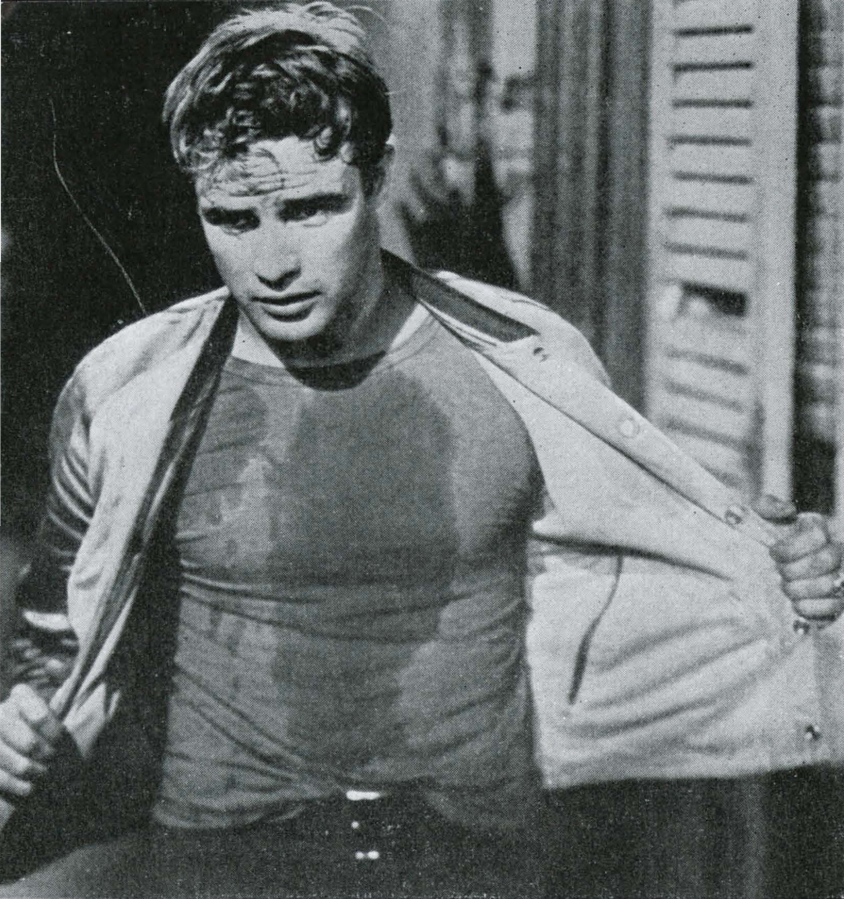
ANIMATION ARTISTS

Audiences in this country will have an opportunity to assess the various styles in cartoon filming during the first International Animated Film Festival, to be held at the National Film Theatre between February 23rd—March 8th. America's productions in this field are widely known, but the excellent work done by some of the smaller film producing countries has so far been only sketchily represented in British cinemas. The programmes will include films from Czechoslovakia, where animation has become a part of national expression on a par with music or the theatre, and receives state support; from Britain, Italy and Japan, where animation still endeavours to make its way without official encouragement; and from China, where there is no lack of official backing but where techniques remain under-developed.

The techniques represented will range from fluid cell animation and stop motion puppet animation to abstract, silhouette and stereoscopic films. In the Eastern hemisphere producers have mainly concentrated on entertainment cartoons; in the West, the medium also takes in industrial and advertising films, and examples of these will be included in the Festival programme.

JOHN HALAS.





AN ACCOUNT OF THE ACTORS' STUDIO

by TONY RICHARDSON

The Method and Why



"I have my own personal rebellion, I don't have to rely on Brando's".—JAMES DEAN.

"This play is dedicated to the thought of James Dean. There is no other actor, and there never has been since the end of the war, who has so wholly represented my generation, here in England, but strangely he is an American. This play in its entirety, I give to Dean. But he is dead now".—MICHAEL HASTINGS' dedication to *Don't Destroy Me*.

"On a huge hill, cragged and steep,
Truth stands
And he who will reach her, about must
And about must go". —JOHN DONNE.

Above: Marlon Brando in "A Streetcar Named Desire".
Left: James Dean in George Stevens' "Giant".

ALL societies can be judged by their heroes. Van Wyck Brooks said: "Young people, all people for that matter, need faith as they need hope and action. They need, above all, romance". The hero is the personal embodiment of this need for romance, and every generation necessarily floats its own. The last few years have seen, spectacularly, the emergence of a new hero—the rebel, the outsider, the protestor. Whatever his surface may be, belligerent, neurotic, self-pitying or frustrated, our hero is always deeply malcontent with the set-up as he sees it. Manifestations are various and universal. The Teddy Boy in England is paralleled by the stilyagi in Russia or the tazizozuku in Japan; and, on a different level, Mr. John Osborne is matched by Mr. Shintaro Ishihara. Of all his disguises, however, none has been more emulated than the version Brando and Dean have presented in the American film. They too are protesting against a stereotype, the practical, self-assured, materialistic success boy of American society. Their rebellion shows the misfit, inarticulate in speech, confused in gesture; the essence of their protest has been what is critically labelled the slouch and slur.

Now both Brando and Dean were trained in the Actors' Studio. Indeed, however unfortunate or unfair the association may be, when we even mention the Actors' Studio in England we have an immediate image based on a blend, an L.C.M. of their performances, together perhaps with those of Rod Steiger and Julie Harris. These automatic associations—the study of which is becoming more and more a key contemporary phenomenon—are often distorting. It is the more essential to challenge and question them. This article is an attempt to do this, to assess how far this image has been conditioned and determined by the method in which both Brando and Dean have worked, and to which popularly they are so inextricably linked.

1

The Actors' Studio was founded in 1947 by Elia Kazan and Cheryl Crawford. They were joined later by Lee Strasberg. Besides those already mentioned, its members have included Tom Ewell, Eli Wallach, Eva Marie Saint, Shelley Winters, Dane Clark, Rod Steiger, Dorothy McGuire, Kim Hunter, David Wayne and Anthony Quinn. Besides these full members, who are limited in number, there is also a group, again limited, of "observers". These have included Clifford Odets, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, William Inge—and Marilyn Monroe. The centre, the inspiration, the mentor of this impressive and talented *galère* is one man: Lee Strasberg. It has been claimed, and on the record not unjustly, that he has done more for the American theatre than any other man in history. To understand him, however, we must go back to Konstantin Stanislavsky, the original creator of the 'Method'.

Stanislavsky began as a cultured, rich, but passionate amateur. The more he became involved with the theatre, the more he became dissatisfied and disenchanted with its conventions and artificiality. The romantic drama had degenerated into empty melodramas designed for the parade of individual actor-managers. Like many other theatrical revolutionaries, Stanislavsky's first work was to bring naturalism and truth back into the theatre, to force the actor to play from the inside rather than the outside. In this he was only part of a greater contemporary movement—the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen in Germany, Gordon Craig in England, Appia in Switzerland, Antoine in Paris. If Stanislavsky had stopped there, his work would have had little more than historical interest. His genius, however, was deeper, more enquiring. The naturalistic revolution had won, the new dramatists (Ibsen, Chekhov, Hauptmann) were

established. He began to consider the whole basis of acting. Passionately serious, he wanted to give it the dignity of recognition accorded to the other arts. Through years of hard practice as actor, director and teacher, and through harder, clumsy writing, Stanislavsky pondered. "What scales, what arpeggi, for the development of creative feeling and experience are required by the actor? All books of theatre are silent on this score; there is no practical textbook".

Practical is the key-word for the whole texture of Stanislavsky's thought and work. He tried to comprehend why an actor's performance can vary from night to night, why one actor with great natural endowments might still give a much less satisfying performance than another who could use his resources more accurately (an astonishing illustration of this was recently provided by the Berliner Ensemble), until he came to understand and analyse the bedrock principles of all acting. On this basis, he tried to formulate a system of training and preparation that could apply to both the student and the mature actor. He was far too much a man of the theatre, however, not to be completely empirical about its use. "If the system does not help you, forget it", he told Stella Adler, wrestling in the intensity of her enthusiasm. "Only perhaps you do not use it properly".

I shall not elaborate the technicalities of the 'Method' here. It can be roughly divided. There are, firstly, exercises for the actor himself, to develop his concentration, sharpen his imagination, stimulate his observation and relax his tensions; and, secondly, to give a way of approaching a play or a part, grasping the motives, the "spine" of a character, analysing the "action" of a scene. No doubt many reservations can be made. Yet this is without question the most superb and logical hypothesis about whatever laws underlie all drama that has been made; and wherever the 'Method' has been applied practically with any understanding, it has had immense results.

Stanislavsky's system was introduced to America by two of his students, Boleslavsky and Ouspenskaya, who opened a school in the middle 'twenties. Here Strasberg and Harold Clurman first greedily devoured the 'Method'. Inspired by this they went on to found, with Cheryl Crawford, the Group Theatre. This was the great idealistic movement in the theatre of the 'thirties. The measure of its success is in the list of its productions, which included *Men in White*, *Waiting for Lefty*, *Golden Boy*, *Awake and Sing*, *The Gentle People* and *Thunder Rock*. Cinematically its influence was enormous. Most



Lee Strasberg (centre) during an Actors' Studio session. Photograph by permission of Theatre Arts Magazine.



The Brando tradition: Paul Newman as the boxer Rocky Graziano in "Somebody Up There Likes Me".

striking of all were the social melodramas associated with the name of John Garfield.

The Actors' Studio is an extension of the ideals and the environment which Strasberg and Miss Crawford partially created and inside which Kazan grew up. Classes are given in the 'Method' and also in a few physical and vocal exercises. The new premises of the Studio form the indispensable place, "for getting together, for hanging around, for fooling around with concepts, all the things you cannot do when you are not working and have no time to do when you are". The focus and centre of the Studio's activities, however, are two weekly sessions when members present scenes and improvisations to each other: afterwards they discuss, criticise, evaluate intentions and achievements. Through this, whether watching or playing, they become more conscious and more aware of their playing, and inevitably of themselves. To talk of acting becoming conscious can arouse our apprehension. Its possible exploitations I shall deal with later; here I want to insist on its positive value if, as is the Studio's aim, it is used deliberately. Stanislavsky never intended the 'Method' to be used as a conscious apparatus. It was rather to be a valuable check-up, a sound point of reference (Dane Clark says, "how much security it can give you when you're up there under the lights"). In an ordinary way, when an actor is rehearsing, the 'Method' should be as instinctive a process as relaxing to a Judo expert.

This awareness of what he is doing is just as important to the established actor as to the beginner. When Geraldine Page decides at one session to improvise a scene entirely from a comedy point of view, she is storing up values that will give fulness to other of her performances. Indeed, real burnishing and subtlety can in most cases only be achieved when pressure is not too intense. Four weeks time, the normal rehearsal period everywhere in the West, suffices at best for a hard, efficient rendering, not a definitive one. The strait-jacket of this method of working is so complete that it is difficult for us even to imagine how Stanislavsky could employ the time and resources he had for rehearsal. That is our failure. The richness of the Berliner Ensemble was a triumphant recent vindication of such conditions.

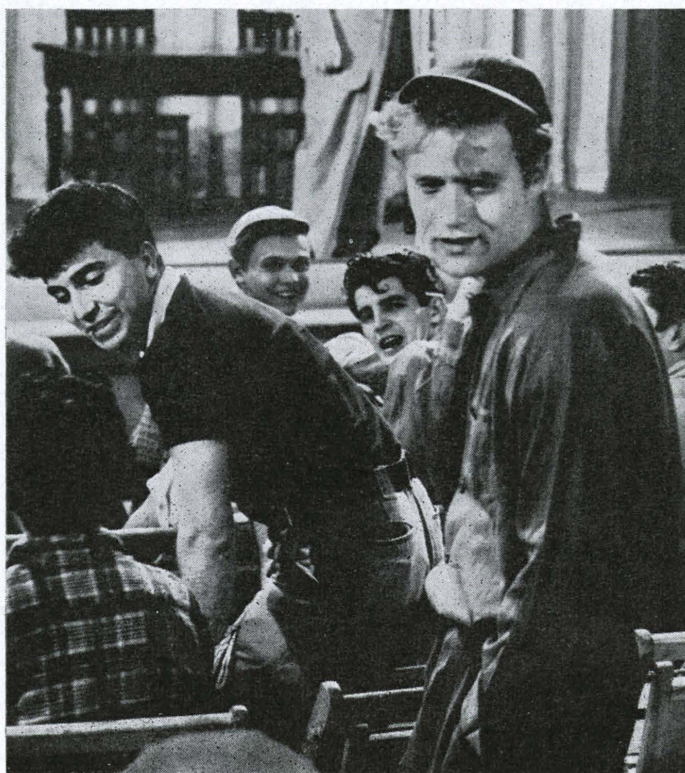
The Actors' Studio provides something of this desperately necessary luxury—for the young actor especially. When

Strasberg says, after a Studio performance, "Did you see that nod of politeness Milt gave when the hobo asked him to sit down? Wasn't it wonderful? Do you know why some of you missed it? Because he didn't dare to give it body. The whole dramatic beat of your walk should have been climaxed by that little nod. You were afraid to explore to the end", he is fertilising what flowers in such bold and revealing detail as Brando's sudden sly-yet-ingenuous-little-boy's licking of the lips before he finally seduces Blanche in *Streetcar Named Desire*. When Strasberg suggests how to portray a movie star—"Sure you've gotten up there because of talent, and because of looks. But maybe there's a third reason. Maybe somebody told you at seven years of age that you've got a monkey face . . . you'll have to get in not only the talent and the looks, but also the monkey face remark"—he is encouraging the thoroughness of observation in such a performance as, for all its uncertainties, Paul Newman's Rocky Graziano in *Somebody Up There Likes Me*.

The Studio's most significant contribution, then, is the creation of a committed state of mind about acting—committed about its relevance to contemporary life and its seriousness as a craft. James Dean accurately summed up part of it: "In Hollywood they'll permit you to be a good actor, but you really have to want to be one. And that desire I get from the Studio". And Dane Clark the other half: "the studio is my Stillmans".

This attitude has resulted in a whole corpus of forthright and sound professionalism. The level of acting in films like *East of Eden*, *Blackboard Jungle*, *Marty* or *Wedding Breakfast* has no parallel anywhere in the West (if I hint at anything similar anywhere else, my guess would be Japan, not Russia). In individual cases it has produced the consistently high work of an actor like Glenn Ford; and to judge by *Bus Stop* its effect on Marilyn Monroe has been miraculous.

Contrast this achievement with the situation here. There are, of course, many devoted and talented actors. There is, though, no real common ground between them. Largely this is because the British public refuses to acknowledge either film or theatre as having any serious place in our society. (This refusal is nowhere more apparent than in its preference



The Brando tradition: Vic Morrow (right) in "Blackboard Jungle".

for the slightly amateur status of successes like *Salad Days* and *The Boy Friend*.) France has at least the central, if dusty, tradition of the Conservatoire and the Comedie. England has no comparable institution and only vague indigenous styles. There are two of these principally: the clipped and frivolous remains of du Maurier in the matinee play, and the Shakespearean. It is no condemnation of Sir John Gielgud personally to say that his has been the dominant influence on serious English acting. I yield to no-one in admiration of many of his performances. His influence has not been intentional. It has resulted from the range of his classical experience, and his extraordinary generosity and support of others, especially at the outset of their careers. But it is only the striking flourishes of his personality, the more obvious elements of his style, that have been exploited by lesser talents to fill the vacuum left by the absence of a really authoritative tradition. This is why so much classical acting seems based on cliché, remote from human experience. It is worth noting that Gielgud has appeared only twice in modern dress since 1940. Since the war, the two most interesting actors to emerge, and receive general recognition, have been Paul Scofield and Richard Burton. It is the more disturbing to realise that Scofield has only appeared twice in modern dress on the stage (not at all on the screen), and that Burton, since he became an established international star, has only played one contemporary part on the screen, and none on the stage. It is hardly surprising that the dedication I quoted at the beginning of this article should be to an American.

2

In the context of the English theatre today, admiration for the unique and basic value of the Studio tends to make me underplay criticism. I want to deal with minor qualifications first. Chief of these is the stylistic. Verse speaking, classical comedy, the oratorical style, are outside the Studio's normal demands. When they are attempted, Studio members prove inadequate. Brando's Anthony was a failure. On the other hand, within their own stylised product, the musical, the Studio has achieved great success. Brando's Sky Masterson in *Guys and Dolls* is both brilliant and genuinely lyrical; even Rod Steiger, not generally the most delicate of players, handles the Judd number in *Oklahoma!* with charming irony.

The far from exhaustive list I quoted earlier is indicative of the representative nature of the Studio. It is perhaps unfair to generalise from such contrasting individuals. Nevertheless, the label of the Studio has been most public on the performances of Brando, Dean and Julie Harris. It is these I want to consider now.

Michael Redgrave has pinpointed as the greatest danger of Stanislavsky's 'Method' "that actors making their first acquaintance with it mistake the truth of feeling which he demanded, with subjected feeling". It is this mistake which, I suggest, accounts for the very potency of their effect on us. It manifests itself in the opposite of the old professional sneer at the Stanislavsky student who bursts his emotional blood vessels, but can show nothing to the audience. All, in fact, is externalisation. Nowhere is this tendency more apparent than in the work of James Dean, partly perhaps because he was the most talented, sensitive and poetic of the Actors' Studio members, partly because he was its spoilt child. His performances in *East of Eden* and *Rebel Without a Cause* are a broken tessellation of shrugs, grunts, hesitations and retreats. This caused his idolator to pronounce in his first stage direction: "Nobody must stand still while on the stage, whether they shake, twiddle, mutter, jerk irascibly, as long as they give a complete overall impression of acting, especially when the speaking parts are inactive". This is not characterisation, not even over-exuberance, but, one feels, a calculated and indulgent effect. George Stevens has spoken of Dean in *Giant*: "he had the ability to take a scene—sometimes he broke it down into so many bits and pieces



Before Brando: John Garfield as a reform school boy in "Dust Be My Destiny", one of the social melodramas produced by Warner Brothers in the late 'thirties.

that I couldn't see the scene for the trees, so to speak . . . he was always pulling and hauling, and he had developed this cultivated, designed irresponsibility". It is this element of the personally conscious, the calculated rebellion, that one most suspects in Studio-trained performances.

How far this is a consequence of the 'Method' is difficult to assess. Stanislavsky certainly would have been horrified by it. He taught, above all, that an actor's concentration must be on the character in a particular situation, and on the character's actions, not his feelings. Although it belongs to the past, it may not be irrelevant to quote here Clurman's description of those aspects of the 'Method' on which the Group Theatre seized:

One was improvisation. This required the actor to do extemporaneous scenes, based on situations emotionally analogous to those in the text. The second and most striking feature of the system as we knew it then was what Strasberg called an exercise in affective memory . . . in this exercise the actor was asked to recall the details of an event from his own past. The recollection would stir the actor with some of the feelings involved in the original experience, thus producing 'mood'. When the actor was in the grip of this mood, he was quite prepared to do the scene calling for the particular mood that the exercise had evoked.

The distortion here is already apparent: wallowing in "mood" is always potentially dangerous because it can insulate from emotional contact. The struggles and aspirations of the Group Theatre, as described in Harold Clurman's book *The Fervent Years*, certainly leave us involved; but the final impression has something of that curiously Buchmanite compound of hysteria and over-humility. The long confessions of idiosyncracies and failings—"it was true that both Strasberg and I were too prolix, that I frequently conducted myself with as much poise as a Holy Roller"—turn from self-knowledge to self-parade. Even in Frederick Morton's brilliant and perceptive report of an Actors' Studio session in

Encore (on which I have drawn extensively in this article), there survives something of the same atmosphere—"all right, whilst you're busy with your guilt feelings I'll ask Bill". Perhaps this has to do with the very public nature of the sessions in the Studio itself. Acting, like all creation, is ultimately private, and rehearsals are wisely behind closed doors. When self-problems are dramatised they tend to become exhibitionist; when individual technical difficulties become the role (as both from report, and from evidence of the Brando/Dean performances), mannerism alone can result.

This stress on the external may be due to a typically American trait: an immediate dash to translate an idea or feeling into concrete terms. Socially this may be a great strength; artistically it often leads to naivete. Arthur Miller's *A View From the Bridge* has a certain formal resemblance to a Greek tragedy; on Broadway, therefore, it was presented in a set like a Greek temple, without even the real door which is essential to the action. Great performances (such as Anna Magnani's in *The Rose Tattoo*, Helene Weigel's in *Mother Courage*, Wilfred Lawson's in *The Father*) are always, it is argued, incredibly, inexhaustibly rich in detail. So every rift must be overburdened with ore, and the danger is in the superficiality and thinness of the gold plating. Even after so superb and dazzling a bout, with an almost insurmountable task, as Julie Harris's performance in *The Member of the Wedding*, I long for the simpler and less determinedly ambitious approach of Henry Fonda in *The Grapes of Wrath*, or of Serge Reggiani, faced with a problem temperamentally no less difficult, in *Casque d'Or*. These last two performances may not be "great", but their sense of character is so firm that details click in them with an unobtrusive logic that can only be called poetic. This lack of a centre is the most widespread of all the Studio's tendencies.

Above all, and inevitably, it is a question of the individual. Elia Kazan has been called by another director of the Studio

"our ambassador to the world". He prefaced his notes to *A Streetcar Named Desire*, "direction finally consists of turning psychology into behaviour". This seemingly innocuous platitude, however, takes on a more sinister ring from the labours and over-stress of *On the Waterfront*, or more especially of James Dean's playing in *East of Eden*. I do not want to assess any of Kazan's films in detail; that has been done in earlier numbers of *SIGHT AND SOUND*, notably by Mr. Lindsay Anderson. It is important only for me to locate the real source of certain reservations that I have about the Studio. Even in his own notes, Kazan provides further evidence. He describes Stella: "She walks around as if narcotised, as if sleepy, as if in a daze. She's buried alive in her flesh. She's half asleep. She is glazed across her eyes. She doesn't seem to see much. Give her all kinds of narcotised business." Tennessee Williams, on the fourth day of rehearsals, spots the result: "Gadge, I'm a bit concerned over Stella. She's bounding around like a co-ed on a benzedrine kick". Brando has given three performances as the inarticulate, thuggish rebel (*Streetcar*, *Waterfront*, *The Wild One*): it is significant how much more mannered his playing has been in the two films directed by Kazan.

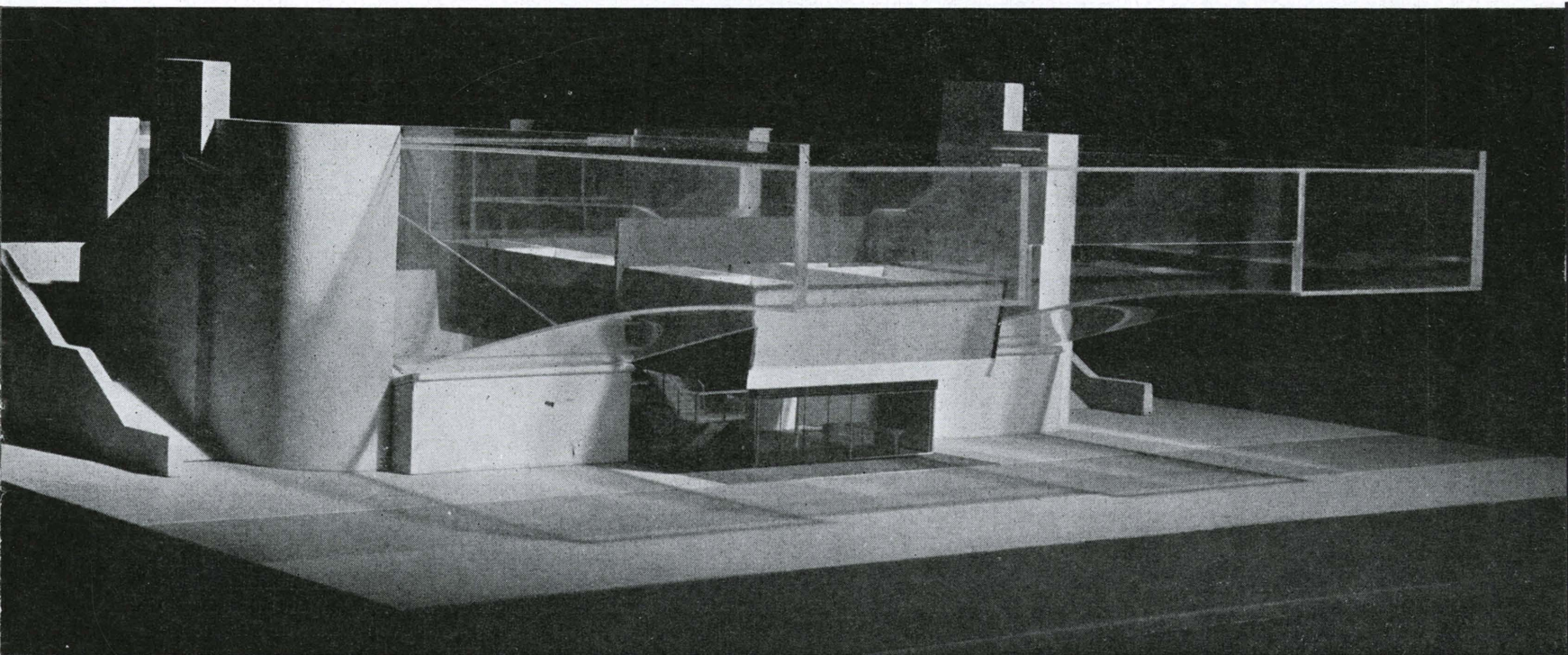
3

However much I admire and approve the intention of the Actors' Studio, I cannot but feel somewhat ambivalently about its results. The same is true of the phenomenon which was our starting point. In the development of Western civilisation, the myth, the god-head, has become increasingly personal. Exactly the same thing has happened in the sphere of entertainment. The grand heroes of yesterday's Olympus, embodiments of mirage and fantasy, the Valentinos, the Theda Baras, the Garbos, have become the Liberaces, the Johnnie Rays of today. The public's response to such latter-day heroes depends on their potential identification. They touch the fear, the loneliness, the pallid sexual ambiguity, the vague religious yearnings of their admirers. Unfortunately James Dean (especially now that, like Adonis, he is dead), is a part of this. In a recent series of programmes on BBC Television, Daniel Winter, a young man who apparently believes that he is Dean reincarnated, said: "Now Dean's gone who's going to express our frustration? I used to watch him on the screen and think, that's my frustration he's expressing. It was like looking on the face of God". He is left with this sterile, adolescent wail: "the world isn't good any longer".

Dean himself is partly responsible: to a large extent he played up to his own myth. His choice of the misfit, the rebel, was in part an indulgence and a retreat into his own weakness. Yet, on the other hand, latent in the very choice of the role was also a quite genuine, if inarticulate, social protest. In a recent article in *SIGHT AND SOUND*, on "The Rebels Without Causes", Miss Penelope Houston has noted that inside all the evasions of this particular genre of American cinema there is some specific and valid social comment, notably about the courts, the police, the educational system and American family life; in his fine article on *Committed Criticism*, Mr. Lindsay Anderson has asked with Mr. John Osborne (whose fundamental attitude of affirmation, however, he perhaps misrepresents), "that voice which cries out, does it have to be a weakling's?" This is the essence of our dilemma. However much one may criticise or make qualifications about detail or individual distortion, affirmation of any sort, even if it takes the form of negation and protest itself, is too rare to be ignored. That is what the Studio is doing: ultimately we must salute it.



Actors' Studio "ambassador": Elia Kazan rehearses a scene from "Baby Doll" with Karl Malden and Carroll Baker.



Model of the new National Film Theatre (exterior), showing how it fits into the existing bridge structure, represented here by the transparent sections:

Building a Cinema

DAVID ROBINSON

AFTER five years in a temporary theatre—the original Telekinema—the National Film Theatre is to have a permanent home. The idea of a national cinema is a new one: ours is the first and only one in the world. The building which houses such a cinema must boast originality as well as efficiency and adaptability; and the publication of the plans for the new theatre prompts some thoughts on the development of cinema design, and on the particular architectural demands of cinema theatres. As with most types of architecture, it is not enough to ask that a cinema should be 'functional'. 'Functional' is an expansive term; the function of a cinema is not necessarily (as it basically is at the National Film Theatre) to provide the best possible technical conditions for projecting and seeing films. It may also be to seduce passers-by from the street or to reassure a regular clientele; it may be to console a down-at-heel audience with warmth and glimpses of luxury, or to astonish them with splendour, or to maintain a pitch of holiday-camp hilarity. The Granada at Tooting or the Dreamland Cinema at Margate would not make very good National Film Theatres; nor could the National Film Theatre take their places.

Quite early in its career, the cinema's scramble after self-respect and respectability was reflected in a conscious striving for more ambitious conceptions of cinema design than the mere addition of extra gilt on the converted shop-front or more electric lamps round the tent. Even so, until the time of the first War proprietors were advised* not to erect new cinemas if there were halls available for conversion, and the sole motive of cinema design was to impress the poorer customers with an air of opulence, while assuring the richer ones that the establishment was respectable and (within reason) tasteful. There is still a sharp remembrance of a

fly-by-night past about this advice: "The flooring should be of tiles or cement. A board flooring is an abomination suggestive of hasty construction and a fleeting stay.*"

The cinema of 1914 is easy to imagine—the easier because it still exists in some out-of-the-way suburbs:

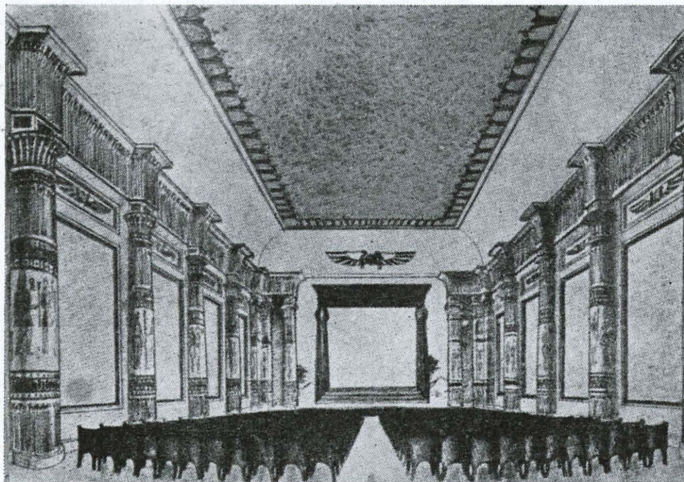
As a general thing plaster casting is to be preferred to imitation marble... For floor covering it is becoming increasingly universal to use a good carpeting instead of linoleum... There is something in the feel of a velvet pile that subconsciously suggests and conveys the impression of luxury... On no account omit to have a few mirrors at convenient points—this is a kindly consideration which always pleases the ladies and enables them to adjust their headgear correctly... a good plan is to have the panels in a rich red colour, and have all the plastic ornaments painted imitation walnut or mahogany; then you will have one of the richest interiors that you could wish*.

Standards of taste and opulence were still based on the grand Victorian rococo of Edwardian music-halls.

Rather unexpectedly, the first fundamental approaches to cinema design were made in Czarist Russia; but the Revolution came too early for them to have much influence abroad. The general status of cinema design at the time of the first War is summed up in Edward Kinsila's *Modern Theatre Construction* (New York, 1917):

The design of photoplay houses in America is yet in an experimental stage. Few architects understand or attempt to learn the requirements of this special type of building... The decoration of the motion picture auditorium may be more ornamental than that of an ordinary theatre, the better to satisfy a more general taste...

* *How to Run a Picture Theatre*, published in 1912 by *The Kinematograph Weekly*.



The "atmospheric" theatre: design for a small Egyptian style photo-playhouse, 1917.

After the War, it fell to Germany to take a lead in cinema design. She suddenly found herself mistress of a richly creative and universally admired film industry which demanded cinemas worthy of it. The leading German architects were dedicated to the dramatic puritanism of 'Modernism', and the financial stringency of the inflation period gave a further incentive towards austerity, restraint, a single-minded functionalism. Kauffman decorated the auditorium of one large Berlin playhouse entirely in deal boards and zinc plating, while the sole decorative motif in Fritz Wilms' elegant Rote Mühle was provided by the disposition of the electric wiring. The experiments of the German designers ranged from the chaste beauty of Poelzig's Babylon to the sensational dramatics of the Caligariesque Titania-Palast by Schöffler, Schlönbach and Jacobi.

Most of the German cinemas were designed to house live entertainment as well as films, and being planned with an ear to acoustic problems they were easily converted to talking films. The same was not true in America, where there had still been little progress towards a real appreciation of the special problems of cinema design. The only change was that pre-war Edwardian bar-roomeries had given way to the new "atmospheric" cinema. The accompanying illustration from Kinsila's *Modern Theatre Construction* shows

that the "atmospheric" theatre was threatened as early as 1917. In the course of the next twenty years, decorators rarely limited themselves to the comparative simplicity of the Egyptian or Oriental style. Cinemas were turned outside in and frescoed with absurd or fantastic super-travel-agency scenery. Audiences were transported to highly coloured Venetian waterways or Valentino-style Saharas. Above them unsleeping skies were lit with a thousand 100-watt bulbs. As the illustration of the Riviera, Omaha, suggests, it was as if a restless ship-and-café decorator had never forgotten the 1903 Academy.

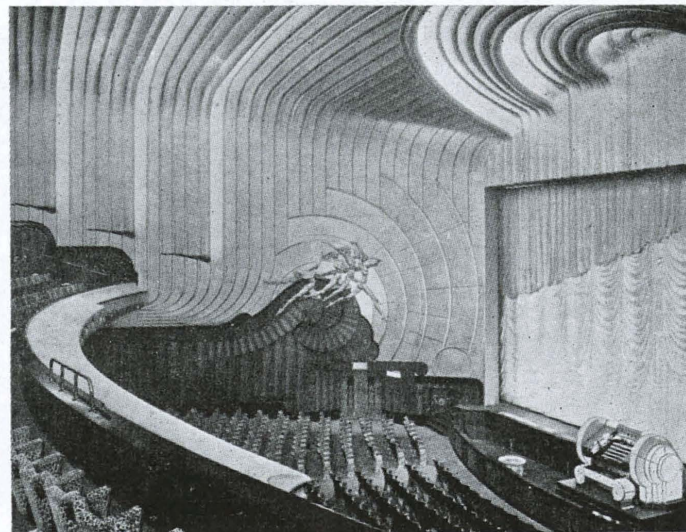
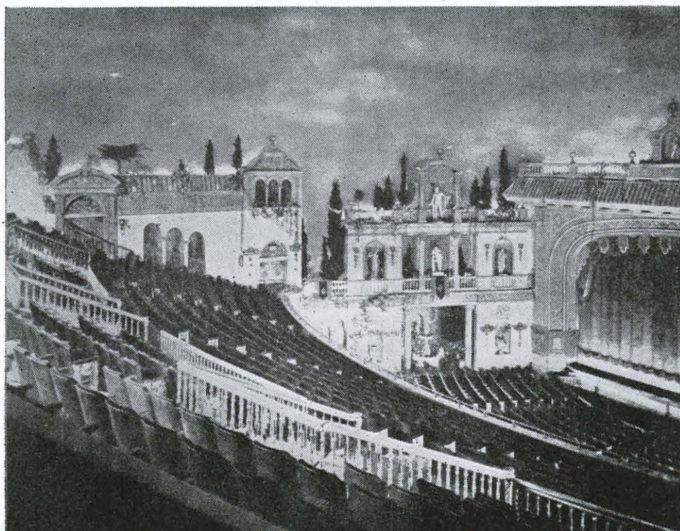
Such cinemas and such a decorative style were ill-suited to the acoustic needs of sound films; and in America a new school of theatre architects, largely inspired by the work of Ben Schlanger, came into being in the late 'twenties. Schlanger and his followers fought for simpler auditoria—'neutralised' was their term—in which the picture should have no rivals for the attention of the audience, and in which all other considerations would be subordinated to the best reproduction of sound and picture. These requirements seem obvious and reasonable enough: any cinemagoer knows how rarely they have been achieved.

Schlanger's emphasis has always been on the auditorium. His exteriors have been so completely subordinated to the inside that sometimes they have looked like corrugated iron lean-tos. Nevertheless, his influence has been felt in auditoria design throughout the world; and even when this influence has amounted only to third-hand imitation, it has done a great deal more good than harm. In thirty years of designing, Schlanger has pioneered features of design which have now become commonplaces. He was one of the first to make use of the reversed floor slope (as used in the stalls of Wells Coates' Telekinema, 1951). He has been a pioneer in acoustic methods, and was the first architect to give serious consideration to the problems of auditorium light levels and to advocate the elimination of black masking round the screen.

2

In England, we have still to develop a consistent tradition or school in cinema design. The great boom in theatre building came in the 'thirties, at a time when it was comparatively rare for competent architects to be commissioned for this work. Generally quantity surveyors or construction engineers undertook the construction work, while the decoration was independently entrusted to local shop-fitters, plasterers and upholsterers. "With the possible exception of Nonconformist chapels", wrote Morton Shand in 1931, "no

Left: apogee of the "atmospheric" manner. The Riviera Theatre, Omaha, by John Eberson (c. 1930). Right: commercial functionalism reaches England. The Odeon, Leicester Square, by Mather and Weedon, 1937.



class of edifice represents quite such a degraded level of design". *The Architect's Journal* reported, at about the same time:

There are cinemas in which a quantitative excess of architecture tries to make up for a qualitative poverty that is often pitiable. There are others (and these are far more numerous) in which to witness a film is like eating out of a newspaper.

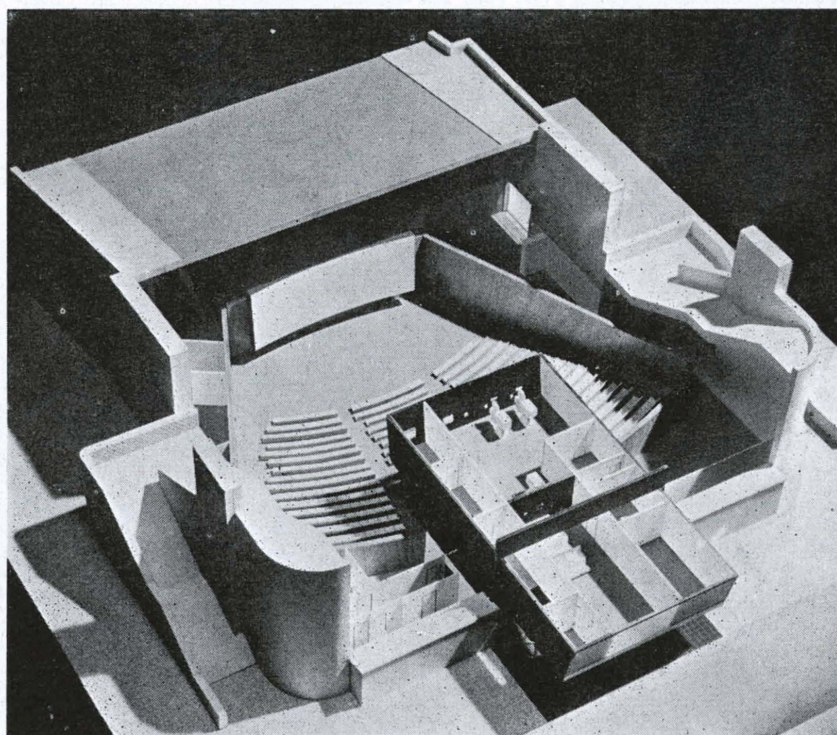
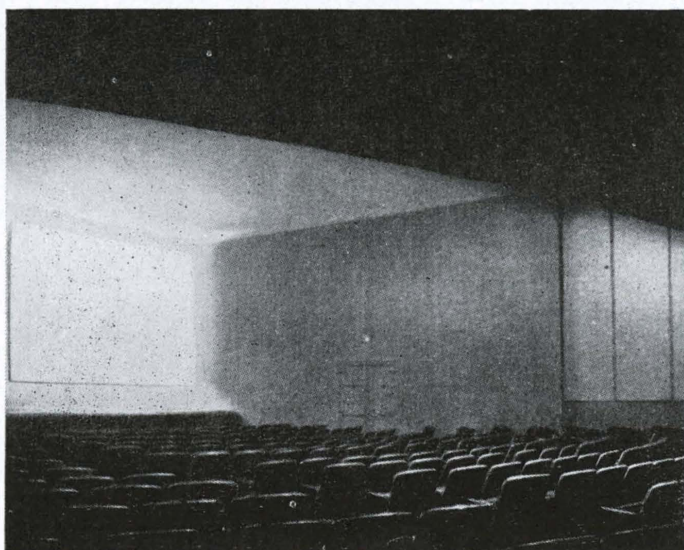
The first notable cinemas designed in Britain were Robert Atkinson's Regent at Brighton (since altered) and Verity's Pavilion, Shepherds Bush, which did much to raise the prestige of cinema designing when it was awarded an R.I.B.A. medal in 1923, as the best building completed in the past three years within an eight mile radius of Charing Cross. Since the early 'thirties there have been an increasing number of attempts to break free from the convention of the glass and tile super-cinema. The best have generally been modest economies which have passed with little comment; the more flamboyant have distantly reflected the German style of the 'twenties. It is these, unhappily, which have inspired most imitators. The striking vertical fin or tower of the Margate Dreamland cinema (a practical feature in a cinema admirably designed for its purpose) has, for instance, become a dreary commonplace of cinema design throughout the country.

Since the War there has been little cinema building. The most interesting new theatre is at Harlow New Town—a house rather grimly designed for eventual conversion into a factory. (This project is not so pessimistic as it at first sounds: the intention is that the town will later have a permanent cinema.)

3

Welles Coates' Telekinema was only intended as a temporary exhibit at the Festival of Britain, and it was inevitable that its conversion to the semi-permanent National Film Theatre would reveal short-comings. It was built for summer use only, and heating has caused serious problems; from a number of seats, the screen is partly obscured; the projection box was not adaptable to permit the use of wide-screen techniques. Nevertheless, it has fulfilled its purpose. Its equipment (by G.B.-Kalee) is to date perhaps the most adaptable in the world, permitting as it does the use of 16mm. and 35mm. projection at speeds of 16, 20 and 24 frames per second, with three-dimensional, twin-headed or television projection and stereophonic sound. The most important contribution of this theatre, however, lies in the lessons which have been learned about the needs of the permanent theatre that will replace it.

The site allotted to the new National Film Theatre is the



Model of the new National Film Theatre, showing auditorium, two-way projection box and small private theatre, overhanging main entrance.

southern arch abutment of Waterloo Bridge. The limitations imposed by the site have been ingeniously overcome by the Architects' Department of the L.C.C., which was responsible for the design of the theatre. Problems were, in fact, considerably fewer than might have been feared: the Building Research Station found that the level of noise transmitted through the bridge was negligible, so that the hanging canopy which ceilings the theatre will provide complete sound-proofing. The entire structure has been neatly fitted under the vast vault; the main entrance will be in the line of the bridge, under the arch, and other exits will lie at each side of the bridge structure, more or less underneath the existing stairways giving access to the bridge. As the building will be entirely within the bridge vault, the architect has not been limited in designing the auditorium by considerations of the theatre's exterior appearance.

The auditorium itself is a kind of angular horse-shoe, seating 500 people. The first row, of 24 seats, is 24 feet from the screen; the back row, of 41 seats, is 64 feet from the screen. The screen is 13 feet high at its minimum, and will show films on ratios ranging from the orthodox 3:4 to 2.35:1. The projection box overhangs the auditorium, which is on one level only, with a conventional rake of about 1 in 4. Jutting over the main entrance to the theatre is a small private cinema, served by the main projection box. The architect's scheme to make the screen of this cinema removable, so that films can be shown on a rear projection screen set in the wall over the front entrance, seems a somewhat showy and unsatisfactory method of overcoming the lack of conventional publicity space elsewhere about the site. A window in the manager's office will command an uninterrupted view of auditorium and screen—a fairly obvious advantage which does not seem to have been adopted elsewhere. A commentator's box, off the main projection box, will also command a view of the screen.

(Continued on page 166)

Classical functionalism: the Island Theatre, Bermuda, by Ben Schlanger, 1946.



NEW

Castellani

I SOGNI NEL CASSETTO
(*opposite page*)

This story of student life is set against the background of an Italian university and marks Castellani's return to neo-realism. With Enrico Pagani, Lea Massari and Cosetta Greco.

Fellini

Le NOTTE DI CABIRIA (*right*)

Giulietta Masina as Cabiria, a "quixotic" prostitute whose faith in humanity aids her in her search for true love. Also in the cast are François Perier and Amedeo Nazzari.

Maselli

La DONNA DEL GIORNO
(*above*)

Maselli's second feature concerns the adventures of a young girl determined to become a star personality. With Virna Lisi (*right, above*), Serge Reggiani (*left*), Haya Hararit and Franco Fabrizi.



ITALIAN PRODUCTIONS





On the set: Billy Wilder with Gary Cooper and Audrey Hepburn.

Wilder in Paris

by JOHN GILLETT

AN invitation from Allied Artists, the company producing Billy Wilder's new film *Love in the Afternoon*, resulted in my visiting the Boulogne Studios on the outskirts of Paris during October, when interiors were being shot. Made entirely in France, this forms part of an ambitious programme of independent productions (involving pictures by Wilder, Wyler and others), from a company that has previously specialised mainly in "B" features. Based loosely on Claude Arnet's novel *Ariane*, which Paul Czinner filmed in 1931 with Elisabeth Bergner, the script is by Wilder himself and I. A. L. Diamond. The lighting cameraman is William Mellor, whose previous assignment was George Stevens' *Giant*. The novel had a Russian background, but the new version (in black-and-white) is set in Paris; a lightly inconsequential affair, it deals with the infatuation of Ariane (played by Audrey Hepburn), young and innocent daughter of a private detective (Maurice Chevalier), for a middle-aged American millionaire (Gary Cooper) with the reputation of an inveterate ladies' man.

Accompanied by Lotte Eisner of the Cinémathèque Française, I arrive on the set—Cooper's apartment—just as Wilder is completing arrangements for a take. Wilder (in a light sweater and peaked cap) is discussing the scene with Audrey Hepburn, who wears a full-skirted white dress. Cooper is reclining silently on a sofa near the window in his dressing gown. Wilder gesticulates widely to indicate Hepburn's movements: listening very attentively, she continually checks on points raised by the director. The scene begins. Hepburn enters from an adjoining bedroom, announcing that she has lost one of her shoes; Cooper rises and in a leisurely way begins to aid the search, meanwhile disclosing to the audience that he has the missing shoe in his pocket. Hepburn goes down on her knees, anxiously scanning the floor. The action finishes and Wilder seems to be considering whether another take is necessary.

My attention is now attracted by a small black dog which is peering round a corner of the set. A short, stocky man holding the lead is talking with Lotte Eisner, so I decide to

investigate. He is Alexandre Trauner, the celebrated set designer, and in turn he introduces me to his dog, Lena. Obviously happy to talk about his work, M. Trauner offers to show us some of the other sets he has designed for the picture. First, we move into the adjoining set, a bedroom stylishly furnished in cream and gold. Led by Lena, we pass further across the stage and enter a large office. This is Chevalier's sanctum in the film, a stuffy, cluttered room hung about with faded portraits, with scores of official looking box files lining the walls. Even in its present unlit state, it manages to convey that indefinable air of being "lived in".

Moving to his own nearby office, Trauner shows us colour sketches of his other designs, some of them strongly reminiscent of his earlier work with Carné. Curious about his working methods, I ask him how much preparation he had for the film. "I went to America to see Billy while he was finishing *The Spirit of St. Louis* and discussed the whole project. Consequently, when he came over to start shooting, we were already prepared". When I ask how he got on in Hollywood, he gives a quick smile: "Oh, very well—but Hollywood you know looks to me rather like a huge exhibition that has never been finished".

Deciding to look for Billy Wilder, I finally track him down in the canteen. Drinking coffee and smoking, he seems relaxed and very responsive to questions. I mention that we had seen *Menschen am Sonntag* (for which he wrote the script) at the National Film Theatre recently, and he seems genuinely pleased. "Hell, I haven't seen that picture in nearly thirty years. All the old guard worked on that—Siodmak, Ulmer, Schuftan. I'm glad some people still take an interest in old pictures". Deciding to ask a directly personal question, I suggest that there has been a noticeable change of direction in his recent work since the bitterness and protest of *Sunset Boulevard* and *Ace in the Hole*. Was there a definable reason for this? "No, I don't think so. You see, I'm a director who prefers not to have a particular style, unlike Hitchcock or Ford. If I get a story I like or a subject that appeals to me, I make it. I've done several light comedies recently (*Sabrina*, *Seven Year Itch*), and I think that *Love in the Afternoon* will be my most romantic film".

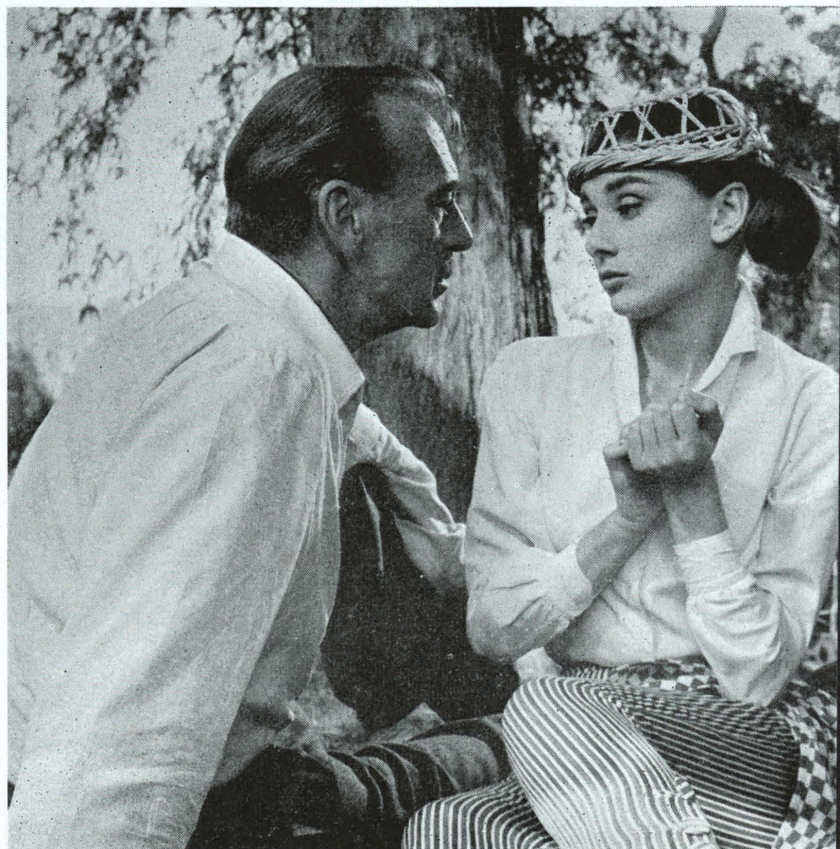
Wilder speaks with considerable enthusiasm about his earlier work with Lubitsch, saying he has always wanted to do a Lubitsch-type comedy like the present film. Turning to his more recent work, I ask about *The Spirit of St. Louis*. "Oh, that was a difficult picture. It's really a documentary about Lindbergh's life and we had to get everything right. There's hardly any newsreel footage around. The special effects were a problem, but I got Charles Eames (the designer and architect) as an assistant for the photographic montage effects. You'll be seeing it in the New Year". Lotte Eisner, who has now rejoined us, refers to a film made by Wilder in France in 1934—*Mauvaise Graine*, with Danielle Darrieux. He laughs loudly and says meaningfully: "You remember that one, do you?" But at this moment we are interrupted when an assistant tells Wilder that the camera crew are now ready for him. He lights another cigarette, shakes hands and hurries away.

Returning to the stage a few minutes later, I see that Cooper is still reclining on his couch, apparently asleep. The next scene will continue Hepburn's search for her shoe, and Wilder explains that he wants her to lie flat under a small

desk near the camera (which is placed at a low angle), look in a wastepaper basket and glance behind a curtain. Cooper will join her and they will play a short dialogue scene before he is interrupted by a telephone call from two girl friends. Hepburn disappears under the desk, goes through the movements and emerges backwards, trying not to crease her dress. Wilder surveys the quietly chattering technicians and turns toward the sofa. Jokingly he shouts, "O.K., shall we rehearse and wake Coop. or shall we just sneak away?" At this Cooper slowly gets up, straightening his dressing gown. The rehearsal goes well until Cooper reaches the lying-down stage. They are both huddled under the desk when he suddenly stops and fishes out the missing shoe from his pocket. "That hurts", he complains, "take it away for a second". An assistant snatches the shoe, whereupon Hepburn begins to giggle. After this, they both gag their lines and everyone starts laughing.

A short pause while the make-up staff remedy the damage done by all the crawling about on the floor. Another rehearsal; but this time neither Wilder nor Mellor seem happy about the position of their heads in relation to the camera. Wilder lights another cigarette, at the same time walking quickly up and down the set. "I'll be glad when I get you in chairs", he mutters. His manner is now tense and concentrated: clearly he is determined that even a relatively minor scene such as this shall achieve maximum effect. Finally he exclaims, "Let's try a take—what the hell, it's only celluloid". The players resume their positions, the telephone rings and Cooper takes his call. He is in the middle of his speech when Wilder shouts "Cut—it's too slow".

Unfortunately the afternoon is wearing on, and I have an appointment to keep in Paris, so at this point I make a reasonably quiet departure from the set. Behind me, the search for the shoe begins again.



"Love in the Afternoon".

BRECHT

and the Cinema



"Die Dreigroschenoper".

by JOHN HANS WINGE

Whoever today wants to fight lies and ignorance and to write the truth will have to overcome five difficulties at least. He must have the courage to write the truth although it is being suppressed everywhere; the intelligence to recognise it although it is being shrouded everywhere; the art to make it usable as a weapon; the judgment to select those in whose hands it will be most effective; the guile to spread it amongst them. These difficulties are great for those writing under Fascism; but they also exist for those who have fled or been driven out, even for those writing in the countries of bourgeois freedom.

BERTOLT BRECHT

THESE were the introductory words to Bertolt Brecht's famous essay on the "Five Difficulties When Writing the Truth", written in 1934 to be spread in Nazi Germany. Even after the defeat of Nazism, he often referred to these problems; and the words provide both a significant insight into the poet's mind and a clue to the many troubles that Brecht had with film-makers (and they with him).

Brecht liked the cinema and enjoyed seeing any good film whenever he found time to do so; at the same time, he had considerable respect for the technical side of film-making. Like most Central European intellectuals, he had no manual

training whatever, and regarded an operation like driving a nail into a wall or fixing an electric light bulb as something mysteriously complicated and quite outside his capabilities. Though intermittently attracted to the cinema, he remained hesitant about approaching it actively, bringing to bear the amazing energy that this shy and unassuming man could display whenever he was in earnest. Having worked with Brecht for many years, I tried to talk him out of these doubts, to persuade him to write whatever he visualised for the screen. It would not be his job to work out the technical realisation. The technicians would respond to an imaginative challenge and solve any problems he might put to them. Brecht used to look at me in his quizzical way, puffing at his cigar, but he remained unconvinced: he had gone through too much already to believe me.

2

Brecht belonged to the little group of young German playwrights who were experimenting with the drama in the years after the first World War. At the same time he was publishing some highly original verse, gaining early recognition from the literary critics. But his reputation remained more or less restricted to circles directly interested in literature and the theatre, until in 1928 his adaptation of John Gay's *The Beggars' Opera* had its first performance at the Berlin Theatre am Schiffbauerdam. (It is this same theatre, incidentally, that now houses his Berliner Ensemble.)

The hit scored by this play and its performance was immediate and spectacular. And although one should not under-rate the part played by the producer, Erich Engel, and composer, Kurt Weill, Brecht himself took quite a considerable hand in both their jobs. The whole of Germany (and soon the whole Continent) was fascinated by *Dreigroschenoper*, and inevitably film producers reacted to a success. The screen rights were purchased; G. W. Pabst was to direct the film, the Hungarian scenarist Ernst Vajda being responsible for the shooting script in collaboration with the writers Bela Balazs and Leo Lania. With all his respect for the secrets of film-making, Brecht had definite artistic theories about the production, ideas linked, as always, to his political convictions. The producers assured him that his demands would be met, but in the heat of filming these promises were largely forgotten. Angered to discover that elementary parts of his message had been disregarded or eliminated, Brecht sued the company.

Pabst's film was of course a success, though on a rather less devastating scale than the stage production. Andreiev's excellent and original decors, Fritz Arno Wagner's camerawork, and the playing of a cast which included such members of the original company as Carola Neher (Polly Peachum) and Lotte Lenja (Weill's wife, who played the part of Jenny again in the recent New York stage production) were all highly and deservedly praised. But the film lacked the particular edge and sharpness of Brecht's wit and generally stressed the play's more romantic elements. It was shot in two versions, Macheath being played in the German version by the Austrian actor Rudolf Forster (on the stage by the springy and almost acrobatic Harald Paulsen) and in the French version by Albert Préjean.

Brecht now refused to have any further dealings with film producers, who on their part distrusted him as a trouble-maker. The young Bulgarian Slatan Dudow, who had studied in Berlin with the experimental stage producer Erwin Piscator and now approached Brecht as an outsider, had therefore a much greater chance of success than a well-known professional might have expected. Officially, Brecht and the writer Ernst Ottwalt were responsible for the script of *Kuhle Wampe* (1932), though Dudow now claims that his own part

in writing and making the film has been under-estimated. This is quite possible, since Brecht was then busy with various dramatic projects and Dudow devoted himself tenaciously to the production. Described by Siegfried Kracauer as "the first, and last, German film which overtly expressed a Communist viewpoint", *Kuhle Wampe* was a study of the unemployed, a film about poverty which ended with a challenge to youth: "Don't be resigned, but determined to alter and better the world". As known (and considerably cut by the German censors), the film was an erratic example of talent: the shortage of money and inadequate technical knowledge and facilities were apparent, but at the same time *Kuhle Wampe* revealed a strong realistic flair and a genuine enthusiasm. It was only after the second World War that Dudow had another chance to direct; he is now one of the principal directors of DEFA, the state-financed East German company.

In both these early Brecht films, Ernst Busch appeared—as the ballad-singer in *Dreigroschenoper* and the male lead in *Kuhle Wampe*. An actor who became a forceful singer of revolutionary songs, Busch was an almost legendary figure among the Berlin workers before the rise of Hitler. He was jailed by the Nazis and freed by the Red Army. Now playing again, he was recently seen in London as the strange judge Adzak in Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*.

3

Brecht himself went into exile after the rise of Hitler, finally settling with his family in Santa Monica, a suburb of Los Angeles. This might conceivably have been the signal for an entry into the film world, but the Europeans in Hollywood were still too weakly entrenched to risk pointing out a man with the reputation of an innovator and a trouble-maker. In 1942, however, Fritz Lang invited Brecht to work on his film about the assassination of Heydrich, the Nazi



"Kuhle Wampe": an evicted family leave their home.



Bertolt Brecht

governor of Czechoslovakia and the man responsible for the massacre at Lidice. Brecht liked Lang, and could not in any case afford to turn down this opportunity. Together they wrote the story of *Hangmen Also Die*; and Brecht, now in every sense more experienced, managed to combine elements of narrative suspense with suggestions of the strong human and political forces behind the national resistance to the oppressors. John Wexley was then assigned to write the shooting script—described to Brecht as a purely technical affair. But Brecht again felt that the script had failed to interpret his intentions, and when Lang approved it and rejected his request for drastic changes he again brought a legal action. He won the decision that the credits should distinguish between the story as written by Lang and himself and the shooting script by John Wexley.

The *Dreigroschenoper* situation, in other words, was to some extent repeated. Both in Berlin and Hollywood, the writers employed (Balazs, Lania, Wexley) seem to have had quite a good understanding of Brecht's ideas, both artistically and politically. Pabst and Lang sensed something of his remarkable artistic personality, but that was all. Perhaps unconsciously, these two talented directors appear to have influenced their writers into working along the industry's accustomed lines; and in each case Brecht went to court. *Hangmen Also Die*, in the emasculated version preferred by Lang, proved in any event to have little distinction, though it remained superior to most Hollywood pictures of the European resistance.

Although mainly occupied with projects for new plays and poems, Brecht considered writing for Hollywood whenever he thought that an idea might be suited to the screen and that a sale might improve his financial position. The following brief verse (titled "Hollywood") shows his feelings about such activities, though in fact he never went to these lengths but was concerned rather to express the sensations of those

fellow-writers who did:

Each morning to earn my bread
I go to the market place where lies are being bought.
Hopefully
I join the queue of those who sell.

His attitude towards the film industry was in fact rather more poetic than realistic, as is illustrated by one story that he wrote especially for the cinema. After his arrival in the United States—he travelled via Finland and the Soviet Union—Brecht was distressed by the soft and tasteless white bread eaten in America. Used to the hearty rye bread of his native Bavaria, Brecht wrote the story of a man who becomes an American success because he can bake bread in the good Bavarian way. I tried to tell Brecht that it was a little naive to assume a story of this sort would be to the taste of a Hollywood producer. But he kept on trying, inevitably without success.

Another abortive project was a screen version of a play that he had written with Lion Feuchtwanger about a Jeanne d'Arc in Occupied France. Feuchtwanger had adapted this into a novel, and Brecht and the French writer Vladimir Pozner collaborated on a screen story. The play had strength and the particular quality of lyricism found in Brecht's writing; but since the story revealed the French people's resistance to the enemy as a fight also against their own collaborators, it was turned down by various Hollywood producers. Pozner thinks that, "for Hollywood it was either too realistic or too romantic. Presumably both".

Brecht also worked with Charles Laughton, whom he had met a few years earlier, on a translation of his play *Galileo Galilei*. They put this on with considerable success at a small Hollywood theatre, with Laughton appearing as Galileo and Joseph Losey directing under Brecht's supervision. It was through Laughton that Brecht was later called in to work on the script of *Arch of Triumph* (1947), Lewis Milestone's glum and ponderous screen version of a novel by Erich Remarque. Milestone had some artistic qualms about this picture both before and during production, and on Laughton's strong recommendation Brecht was called in as a script doctor. He was hired, worked for a few weeks, but could do nothing with what was already a hopeless case.

4

It may have been forgotten that Brecht was one of the last witnesses called before the Un-American Activities Committee during the hearings that culminated in the imprisonment of the "Hollywood Ten". But the investigations into Communism in Hollywood were broken off shortly afterwards and Brecht could then sail for Europe. His Berliner Ensemble was formed and opened with the first German production of his play *Mother Courage*. Its success encouraged ideas of a screen version, and when I arrived in Berlin late in 1949 Brecht had just rejected a screen story by R. A. Stemmle, the well-known writer and director. The assignment was then turned over to two experienced DEFA writers. Brecht asked me to be present at a story conference to observe his problems, and these were certainly clear to see. He invited me to re-write a scene with him to serve as a model for the writers, but this did little good. It was difficult enough in any case for the film-makers he had to deal with to understand his language and follow the very individual pattern of his thought.

He visualised pictures on the order of the old daguerrotypes—their sharpness of focus, their softness of light distribution, their easy realism. He felt they had a certain poetic feeling which he wanted for his own picture. A firm opponent of cheap "naturalism", he refused to have anything shot on location, but wanted fields, trees and roads to be constructed in the studio. He wanted a certain artificiality of atmosphere to prevail, to lift the events above an everyday level. This would also assist his dialogue, much of which

was bound to seem stagey to the veteran film-makers who automatically mistrust anyone from the theatre. In spite of their doubts, Brecht remained undeterred.

Finally Emil Hesse-Burri, a writer who had already done some work with Brecht, was called in and produced a shooting script which Brecht approved. It was announced during 1955 that Wolfgang Staudte would direct the film, with a cast headed by Helene Weigel, Simone Signoret and Bernard Blier. Shortly after the start, however, the whole plan was abandoned. There are several conflicting versions of what happened, and unfortunately I was never able to talk to Brecht about it. It has been reported, though, that the project will be taken up again, perhaps next year, with Erich Engel as director—the same Engel who in 1928 directed the first stage production of *Dreigroschenoper*.

In 1953 Curt Bois took the leading part in the Berlin production of Brecht's *Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti*, a comedy concerning the equivocal relations between master and servant. Curt Bois was one of the most original comedians of pre-Hitler Berlin, his technique having points in common with Chaplin's long before he had any chance to see a film by the master. He proposed a screen version of the play, to be shot at the Wien Film am Rosenhugel studios in Vienna. Agreeing to this idea, Brecht suggested that Joris Ivens should direct it as his first feature. Ivens, already committed to another film, instead recommended Alberto Cavalcanti, who had just returned to Europe from Brazil and who directed the film from an adaptation by Vladimir Pozner.

Cavalcanti was considerably handicapped, though, by his inability to speak or read German: everything had to be translated into French for him, and he had to employ a French-speaking dialogue director to direct the German-speaking actors. With Brecht, as with every poet, language is of supreme importance. It gives the clue to the whole style of the performance, and in Brecht's case assumed a particular significance because he wrote a highly personal kind of German which did not readily lend itself to translation. Cavalcanti had access to Brecht's story but not to his language, and the degree to which he had to depend on his dialogue director obviously imposed additional difficulties on what was already a fairly formidable undertaking. But Cavalcanti is an artist with a fine sense of the unwritten, and the result, remarkably enough, was a film that retained some authentically "Brechtian" qualities.

The fifteen years of exile were lost to Brecht as to every European artist who shared his fate. And these fifteen years are an immeasurable loss to the theatre, since Brecht resumed his stage experiments only in 1949 and was far from having reached a point of artistic certainty at the time of his death. These lost years also prevented him from finding his own proper relation to film-making—and his original and unorthodox approach to every artistic endeavour might have been of immense value to the cinema. The conformists did not like working with an iconoclast such as Brecht, but to every artist a meeting with him remained an unforgettable experience.

"Herr Puntila": Curt Bois (left) as the rich landowner who is more genial drunk than sober.



Film Reviews

GIANT

WHEN Scott Fitzgerald claimed "The very rich are different from you and me", and Hemingway countered, "Yes, they have more money", both novelists were commenting fairly revealingly on themselves, and indirectly indicating a social attitude. Roughly speaking, and with a slight leaning towards the Hemingway viewpoint, these are the propositions with which *Giant*, George Stevens' massive screen version of Edna Ferber's novel, concerns itself. The central characters—a Texas cattle king, his wife, and a self-made oil tycoon—are very rich indeed; behind them, but at the centre of the film, is Texas itself, the millionaire state founded on beef and oil, with its derricks rising to the sky like challenging symbols of power and money.

The story of *Giant* (Warners) is in essence the not unfamiliar one of the husband and wife who love each other without understanding. Bick Benedict (Rock Hudson) is a Westerner who looks back to the simpler traditions of the frontier; his wife (Elizabeth Taylor) brings from the East a more sophisticated appreciation of the relations between power, privilege and responsibility. Benedict experiences a kind of failure, when he reluctantly realises that to his children human relationships mean more than the link between the landowner and his property; and the second half of the film develops this theme through a series of minor family conflicts. On the edge of this central story is Jett Rink (James Dean), the ranch-hand who strikes oil, makes his fortune, but cannot enter the society he both despises and envies. His story seems designed to illustrate, on a rather elementary level, the old law that power corrupts: the diffident, ambitious boy becomes an arrogant vulgarian, and at the climax of his career, a dinner held in his honour, he greets his guests by slumping drunkenly across the table. There are traces of *Gatsby* in Jett Rink, the man blindly in pursuit of an ever-receding dream.

What the characters stand for, though, is more important than who they are, and it is a social rather than a directly human picture that the film presents. The opening episodes—the Texan's visit to the Eastern aristocracy, the atmosphere of condescension and privilege, the sudden romantic encounter—are all very reminiscent of *A Place in the Sun*. Stylistically, Stevens echoes the earlier film: here again are the slow, romantic dissolves, the repeated running of one image into another, the immensely deliberate and gradual working into the story. Characters are placed firmly and authoritatively; and, as in *A Place in the Sun*, the attitude to the rich is one of snobbery lightened by irony. The transition to Texas provides some of the film's most telling passages. The private railway coach, with its Edwardian opulence, the ranch-house, a Gothic monstrosity set down in a bare expanse of desert, the open Rolls touring the dirt roads—these are the images of luxury and desolation through which an attitude is established. The ostentation of Texas, its blatant materialism and self-sufficient isolationism, are satirised in a series of episodes whose tone ranges from open disgust to gentle reproof. But the film (and presumably the novel, which I have not read) concludes that Texas makes up for the Texans: size and splendour are their own justification.

Stevens, who in *A Place in the Sun* built a style out of mannerism, here puts less and less reliance on decoration as the film progresses. The tempo is slow and controlled, and the even pace has the effect of giving flat passages in the script (by Fred Guiol and Ivan Moffat) an emphasis they can scarcely sustain. As usual with this director, the dramatic tone is extraordinarily quiet: voices are seldom raised, conversations, overheard rather than heard, come in broken snatches of dialogue. This can create a remarkable impression of intimacy; it can also, when the material lacks intrinsic interest, become deadeningly monotonous. The weakness of *Giant* is the weakness of the big, as opposed to the great, American novel: characters and situations are finally too stereo-

typed to bear the immense weight that the director is putting on them. There are long stretches when nothing much happens, or seems likely to happen, moments of over-coloured action; and there are the sudden insights, passages of sharp dramatic concentration, the realisation that what we are getting, with all the film's defects, is an authoritative picture of a certain social climate.

Dramatically, the story loses through the failure to bring Jett Rink sufficiently close to the centre of the action. At the outset, Rink is sullen, wary, restless. The script presents the character through a series of statements, but James Dean's performance is a matter of implications, suggestions of neurotic stresses and tensions. The delicate little scene in which he entertains Leslie Benedict to tea, the shots of the ranch-hand pacing out the boundaries of his property, glorying in the fact of ownership, are beautifully managed. In the later scenes, though, Dean for the first time in his tragically short career had to go beyond the characterisation of the young rebel; and his technical resources fail to see him through. His relative failure (and it is only relative) throws some incidental light on Stevens' direction of his players, particularly in the context of Stevens' own comment on Dean quoted elsewhere in this issue. Putting it very approximately, one might say that Kazan works through his actors, while Stevens prefers his actors to work through him—the value of the performance, in other words, is essentially its contribution to the mood and temper of the individual scene. A somewhat limited player, such as Elizabeth Taylor, can appear at her best in a Stevens picture; an actor like James Dean seems to be putting more into the part than the director needs for his own purposes.

As *Giant* assumes the proportions of a family history, with its leading players going unconvincingly grey, this formidably lengthy film becomes something of an endurance test. But Stevens keeps a steady grip on his subject, and the film emerges from an anticlimax that should have been a climax—Jett's drunken speech to an empty room—into a remarkably firm and impressive final statement. It is not particularly striking or surprising that Benedict should become involved in a brawl in defence of his Mexican daughter-in-law's right to eat in a roadside café. But in contrast to the semi-hysterical tone of so many American problem pictures, Stevens gives the episode real weight. The last shot holds the image of Benedict's two grandchildren, one fair and Anglo-Saxon, one Mexican; and in a final characteristic dissolve, the faces of the two children merge together. It is an affirmation, and it is not the way one expects an "epic" to end.

Giant's strength is its sheer solidarity. Its weakness is that solidarity, the authoritative style, sometimes seems an end in itself, that the director may miss the significant moment by putting as high a dramatic pressure to bear on the trivial and obvious. No-one minds an artist setting out to plough a field with a knitting-needle, as someone said of James, but it's important that he should wholly convince us the field is worth ploughing. *Giant*, though, remains something to reckon with: one hopes that Stevens will not keep us waiting another three years for his next picture.

PENELOPE HOUSTON.

GERVAISE

WHEN René Clément came to England to make *Knave of Hearts*, the candid searchlight he turned on various hitherto revered aspects of national character called forth some winning protests. But the actresses called upon to interpret his impressions responded with a suspicious agility and revealed unexpectedly entertaining talents in the process. In *Gervaise* (Miracle), however, the native endowments which Maria Schell brings to her part prove a stubborn encumbrance. As though mistrustful of what the director might evoke in her, the actress draws heavily on her battery of personal mannerisms; and the result, schmalzily Viennese, is almost a parody of the good work she has done in the past. Her performance flaws, in fact, what might have been a truly great film; as it is, *Gervaise* remains an astonishing work and the most significant French film for some years.

Gervaise is the heroine of Zola's *L'Assomoir*. The film begins when her lover, and father of her two children, abandons her for another woman. A happy marriage to an industrious workman is clouded when an accident causes him to give up his work and he slides into drunkenness and sloth. Gervaise's efforts to run a successful laundry are defeated when her former lover returns, strikes up a friendship with her husband and moves in on them to form an unholy and disastrous *menage à trois*. The husband's



"Giant"

hideous death in drunken insanity releases her from bondage; but by now, her spirit irreparably broken, she can only remain sunk in hopeless squalor and apathy.

From this unappetising story—one of Zola's series of novels dealing with the Rougon-Macquart family—emerges a passionately moral account of the struggles of natural good-heartedness and courage against the bestiality and stupidity fostered in conditions of squalor. Clément responds superbly to the challenge of Zola's fascination with the details of low life. His characters are deeply rooted in their surroundings and strongly conditioned by them—again, with the exception of Gervaise herself. The actress is content to see the character for the most part in terms of a simple nineteenth century novelette, forever smiling though tears, forever turning the cheek to fate, the oppressor, in a glow of masochism. Here is nothing of Zola's *Provençale*, a mother at 14 and physically coarsened at 22 by her way of life; character is a business of brave smiles, characterisation mainly an occasional ungainly walk to convey the sense of years of toil. If this judgment seems unduly harsh, it is because the damage is central, and the occasional flashes of excellence in the playing of little final account. The actress is clearly not entirely to blame: the part is not hers; the faulty rhythms which burden so many scenes would be appropriate in another setting (here, in a crisis of exasperation, she even manages to overturn a table slowly); the aura of sanctimonious beauty which obscures so much of the film's action would probably not be her resort in a role within her temperamental grasp. But nevertheless the responsibility is greatly hers, and cannot be burked.

Yet *Gervaise* is still a remarkable film. It is particularly interesting, after various recent unsatisfactory adaptations of novels, to discover to what extent the dense texture of a book

such as this can be recaptured on the screen, and the flavour of a period recalled. So successful is the film in this respect that, after only a single viewing, one is quite incompetent to list the wealth of detail which brings its scenes to such stirring and intricate life: the intangible sense of immediate familiarity with the sordid, beautiful streets sodden under the winter rain or silenced by the damp and grimy mists, or the uncannily private interiors with their peeling walls, their crumpled beds, their clutter of living jumble. In fact, the film's picture of a Paris slum under the Second Empire is consistently one of the most visually evocative I have seen. In such single expressive strokes as the disgruntled, sleep-coarsened grimace of the returned lover as he scrabbles a handful of hairpins from the depths of the bed, or in such whole scenes as the wedding in the rain, and the subsequent hilarious retreat into the Louvre, or the parade of *gourmandise* in the long party episode, the director's invention is masterly and assured. In the party scene, table-manners from the affected to the rapaciously gluttonous are observed (and always in the interest of the characters); the scene is superbly controlled, the tensions sustained and advanced. The mood moves to a climax as the irate husband, goaded by the sight of the lover lounging in the street outside, advances across the road to confront him. Face to face, the belligerence of the one and the insouciance of the other give way to mutual assessment and then to approval, the camera holding the two men in a close two-shot. It is a wordless scene of great daring, subtly timed and wholly successful.

In such handling of his actors as this, Clément reveals another fully developed aspect of his talent. As in the work of John Huston at his best, the acting is refined to the sharpest precision of motive and mood; in the perky gait of a child admitted into



"Moby Dick": Richard Basehart and Friedrich Ledebur.

adult collusion and entrusted with a sinful errand; in the warm deceit of the men as they exult in nods and nudges over a franc filched for an illicit drink; or in the women's quick gushes of affection over a neighbour's downfall. A sensual abandon emanates from the characters in *Gervaise*, in which only the central figure finds no part. But from this general excellence François Perier's portrayal of the husband still stands out. His degeneration from sober artisan to hopeless drunk is a triumph, and culminates in a scene of almost unbearable horror when he destroys his wife's shop in a drunken frenzy.

Gervaise is a great achievement: a film to see once to accept its limitations, and a second time to concentrate on its rich rewards.

DEREK PROUSE.

BABY DOLL

As Elia Kazan acquires a measure of financial as well as artistic independence, the importance of the place he holds in the American cinema increases. Intentionally or not, he has become the spokesman of certain contemporary attitudes; and from *On the Waterfront* to *Baby Doll* we have the complete circle, the picture of *homo Americanus* as a victim of blindly destructive forces, painfully engaged in waging his battle of conscience.

Baby Doll (Warners) is only indirectly and by implication a social drama: its real subject is the sexual awakening of a young girl married to a man twenty years older than herself. The marriage is as yet unconsummated, and the film opens at the moment when the girl is about to fulfil her promise to her husband, genuinely to become his wife. Kazan and his screenwriter, Tennessee Williams, season this wholly arbitrary situation by making *Baby Doll* a symbol of wanton sexuality. The film's setting is again the deep South, and much of it was shot at Benoit, a small town in the Mississippi delta near Tennessee Williams' own birthplace.

Like Blanche Dubois, like the paralysed heroine of *The Glass Menagerie*, *Baby Doll* lives on the edge of the real world, creating for herself an illusory world compounded of childhood memories, but also heavily charged with sensuality. She is not just a simple, romantic teenager: like any good Tennessee Williams heroine, she has already been marked by the stupidity and brutality of her surroundings. Sharing in the corruption of this world, she will finally succeed in adjusting herself to it—though without, in the process, questioning the social and moral assumptions which have almost brought her to disaster. Kazan consciously exploits the whole atmosphere of refined decadence characteristic of his

writer. He uses all his technical skill to involve us in the film's dubious setting, to undermine the spectator's critical sense and to make him share, willingly or unwillingly, in its atmosphere of collective hysteria. It is not, I think, an exaggeration to say that the films and plays on which Kazan and Williams have collaborated depend to a great extent on this kind of sleight-of-hand, on trickery considered as a fine art.

The end determines the means, and Kazan ensures that the tone of his film stays wholly in line with its basic assumptions. Carroll Baker, who plays *Baby Doll*, is tricked out with all the showy apparatus of sex: peroxided hair, sluttish clothes, a calculated laziness in gesture and attitude. In spite of this concern for the complete identification of the player and the part, a hallmark of the Actors' Studio, it is as impossible here as in Marlon Brando's virtuoso playing in *On the Waterfront* to overlook the basic conventionality of the style imposed by Kazan on his young actress. *Baby Doll* is really nothing more than another decorative element in the film, almost on a level with the crumbling old house where the action takes place, or the metal cot where she retreats into her erotic-infantile dreams. The player becomes in effect part of the symbolism of the film, and there is no better example of this than in the first shots of *Baby Doll*, lying back in her cot sucking her thumb, with one bare leg trailing, and with film magazines spread around her on the floor in an atmosphere of carefully calculated disorder. Even the actress's appearance helps to round off this characterisation heavy in Freudian over-tones: her rather square and childish face, her awkward movements, brilliantly convey the impression of a little girl who would steal her grandmother's sweets or pull her neighbour's hair in class. As created by Kazan, *Baby Doll* becomes the symbol of a sort of vicious innocence.

Karl Malden, in the part of the frustrated husband, develops the Actors' Studio method almost to the point of caricature. Playing on his rough physique, Kazan has encouraged him to develop a characterisation halfway between his sentimental bachelor in *A Streetcar Named Desire* and Brando's brutish Stanley Kowalski in the same film. One can also detect in the performance some traces of the priest in *On the Waterfront*. It seems that Kazan, in his films at least, rarely succeeds in achieving two really satisfactory performances from the same actor, that he ties the player to a certain type of part, to a whole battery of mannerisms which, repeated too often, begin to work against the dramatic truth of the character. There was evidence of this in Brando's playing in *On the Waterfront*, a brilliant performance in an essentially sophisticated style far removed from the bare, realistic playing that the part of Terry demanded. Karl Malden, in any event, goes through the film at the top of his voice, with little regard for dramatic shading, and his performance comes near to upsetting the balance of the whole. He is, however, the agent who sets the drama in motion, not its protagonist.

The third main character is Silva Vacario, an employee of the local cotton gin, who works on *Baby Doll* in order to find out whether her husband was responsible for starting a fire there. A Sicilian immigrant, Vacario would be simply another in the line of raffish toughs popularised by Tennessee Williams and William Inge were it not for the remarkable playing of Eli Wallach, another newcomer from the Actors' Studio. Representing the only thinking character in the film, Vacario takes advantage of the guileless *Baby Doll* to obtain written proof of her husband's part in the fire. The unexpected arrival of the husband forces a denouement, when Vacario runs the risk of forgetting his mission in *Baby Doll's* arms. Characteristically, the integrity of the workman is betrayed, and he is shown as ready to yield blindly to that "fate" of which sex is the beginning and end.

With the collaboration of playwrights like Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller, and of the designer Joe Mielziner, Kazan has endeavoured in his stage productions to break down the theatre's restrictions in space and time, to give the stage something of the cinema's greater freedom. His object has been the same as that of Bert Brecht—to attain a greater sense of reality—but his achievement has in fact been almost the reverse of Brecht's. Kazan's art is above all that of visual effect, style developed to the point of affectation. He heightens the spectator's sense of illusion, plunges him into a sort of no-man's land of art for art's sake where moral considerations no longer have any real meaning. It is worth making the comparison with Brecht, not for reasons of political opportunism, but to underline and clarify the present necessity for the Western artist to express himself in terms of conscience. The true artist cannot afford to add through his work to the general confusions and ambiguities of our time: rather, his job should be to question and consider the accepted standards. Brecht in

the theatre, like Bresson in the cinema, affirms the pre-eminent importance of the artist's critical conscience, his questioning individualism.

Whatever revulsion one may feel from the decaying social climates of *On the Waterfront* and *Baby Doll*, one can deny neither Kazan's significance as an artist nor the extent to which his work expresses a characteristically American view of our time. One or two passages in *Baby Doll*, moreover, show a skill in the direction of actors that borders on genius. Kazan here relies less than previously on the kind of atmospheric tricks that jarred in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. In one astonishing scene (the explanation at the door of the house) he holds his two leading players for several minutes in a single close shot, achieving an intensity of dramatic expression that entirely justifies his own comment of a few years ago—"Acting in pictures is much more demanding than on the stage. The camera penetrates like a microscope". Finally, Kazan's work has the merit, even though it may seem a somewhat negative one, of holding up to us certain aspects of our civilisation, typifying its particular corruptions: of this gift, *Baby Doll* is a particularly striking example.

LOUIS MARCORELLES.

MOBY DICK

MOBY DICK (Warners) belongs to the same genre of films as *War and Peace*, *Le Rouge et le Noir* and *Richard III*, and the assumptions they work from seem basically similar: that culture can be box-office if it is manned with a big enough battalion of prestige credits, that 'names' count. Stars, international writers (Ray Bradbury in this case), top designers are all enrolled, and the musket ranks held by leading feature players. There is, however, a further assumption which triggers their real impulse: that in tackling the great classic, you are getting so much 'art' in the can from the start. Naturally, if this is your recipe, the more 'names' you can mix in, the richer your final cake will be.

This is, of course, a fallacy. Too often it has the opposite effect, and the distinctively individual contribution is absorbed in the mass. What is interesting is the desperate naivete from which the assumptions spring—desperate because it is often the refuge of directors whose ambitions or success have outgrown their talents. They are forgetting a lesson that sometimes they have themselves taught: that cinematically all material has to be re-created, and is as good and only as good as its re-creation. As a starting point, reverence and respect for a classic may be admirable. Soon, however, they are likely to become the public mask that disguises the lack of a genuinely personal response, the failure to rise to an imaginative challenge. This is the case with *Moby Dick*. John Huston has for years wanted to film the novel; he has perceived its main effects. But he has been unable to make the book his own cinematically, and the final gesture the film makes is simply that Melville once wrote a "Great Book".

The Red Badge of Courage provides a rewarding comparison. Dissimilar as the personalities of the two writers are, both *Moby Dick* and *The Red Badge* are built on the same contrast: they both present, with fascination, an objective account of a particular skill and calling (the militia, the whaling), and colour it with a vivid personal reaction. For them both, their profession is technique, poetry and philosophy, packaged in one. *Moby Dick* can be taken as a straight sea yarn or even something of a technical treatise on whaling, and this is why Melville was able to give it the queer dislocation that makes it a masterpiece. Beneath the fiction lies the hard documentary fact of Melville's life at sea, which moulded his own vision.

As with *The Red Badge*, Huston has seized on the heightened pressure of the book. But he has failed to comprehend the balance, the interior stresses by which it was produced. The spectacle he can certainly provide—the painted Queequeg, the weird Coleridgean calm, the whalebone leg of Ahab—but, because he has been unable to realise the context, the ordinary weary grind of life on the *Pequod*, the careful expertise of the whale hunts, these become just so many theatrical effects. Wherever the film touches on the pure routine (the melting down of the whale, for instance) it is, significantly, at its most perfunctory. The hunts themselves become in Huston's handling a wild, artificial threshing for exciting action sequences.

There could, of course, have been many valid ways of making this film. It could have been treated simply as an exciting sea-

narrative; it could have employed a conscious visual style (like Visconti's in *La Terra Trema*) matching Melville's deliberately literary dialogue. But because his approach is finally external, Huston falls between all stools, grasping eclectically for the instant pay-off. The chapel scene (in which Orson Welles guest-stars) has something of the Visconti manner both in setting and technique; the departure of the *Pequod* suggests an unsuccessful attempt to be Ford. Only the opening—a solitary figure picking his way beside a mountain stream and turning into close-up for a forthright "Call me Ishmael"—has real boldness. For the rest, though the film is a physically battering experience (chases and storms are staged with the maximum sound and fury), there is little that convinces.

Nowhere is this lack of substance more apparent than in the human relationships, and their bizarre and complicated undertones have disappeared. This, of course, is partly due to the playing, but the responsibility is essentially the director's and it becomes difficult to criticise the actors themselves. Nevertheless, in any circumstances, Gregory Peck is temperamentally wholly unsuited to Ahab. Deep inner obsession, psychotically wounded rage, become with him the strained intensity of a schoolboy playing Macbeth.

Huston's real power and inventiveness seem indeed to have been concentrated on the film's technical aspects, and in particular its colour. In this he has already pioneered with *Moulin Rouge*. Working here with the same British cameraman, Oswald Morris, he achieves a remarkable and original exploration. In the first place he exploits a whole range of cool tones to give the film an outstanding visual unity and beauty. In the second he combines these tones with black-and-white photography to cast over certain scenes an eerie, pallid glow. While acknowledging the resourcefulness, and even the authenticity, of his pale sea-washes, the rightness of this particular approach can still be questioned: there seems, finally, a softness, a romance about it, unsuited to the clotted vigour of Melville's writing or the dourness and hardship of his characters.

In some other effects, the film is not so satisfying. The green glow igniting the weapons in the electric storm is pure science



Eli Wallach and Carroll Baker in "Baby Doll".

fiction; Moby Dick himself is just acceptable, but the first captured whale looks pathetically cardboard. Indeed this bloated technical monster is a not inadequate image for the whole creation. It is a sad straying of the talent that once created *The Maltese Falcon* and *The Asphalt Jungle*.

TONY RICHARDSON.

WAR AND PEACE

It was inevitable that the novel should be attempted and that the attempt should fall infinitely short; almost inevitable, in the existing mood of the international cinema, that failure would take the form it has, bleakly respectable rather than ostentatiously grand. Here is the cinema consciously on its dignity, aware of its responsibility to a great novel, and aware at the same time that nothing goes better at the box-office than spectacle sanctioned by art. *War and Peace* (A.B.-Pathé) is not, or not often, vulgar: the scriptwriters have chipped a few authentic splinters from Tolstoy's monumental novel, and the Italian army has been deployed in force to provide some fine battle panoramas. But the \$6,000,000 film trudges dourly through its three and a half hours of screen time, a heavyweight only in its dimensions.

The script's achievement is to cut *War and Peace* down to the size of *Gone With the Wind*; and only the very naive could have expected otherwise. Any screenplay must impose its own order on the story, disregard the commanding, undisciplined sweep of the original, the careless liberality of genius that can wrap a theory of history inside a novel, follow a moment of lyrical intensity with a dissertation on strategy, and develop a landscape which is vast precisely because every detail is in focus. Where *Anna Karenina* can be cut in half, reduced to manageable proportions, *War and Peace* can only be compressed, dehydrated. Characters and situations recognisably survive, but they are detached from the social scene, cut out of the thinnest cardboard. Take, for instance, the tiny episode in which a small girl, perched on top of a stove, watches Koutuzov's council of war. The film retains the incident and the little girl, but has no time to make the shift of viewpoint that her presence requires, to involve her dramatically in the scene. Minor characters—Nicholas Rostov, Sonia, Princess Maria—lurk uneasily in the background of the story; Anita Ekberg makes a short, startling and inapposite appearance as Princess Helene; the Rostovs are a jolly but unaccountably bourgeois household; and Koutuzov (Oscar Homolka) and Napoleon (Herbert Lom) are men of destiny as Hollywood traditionally presents them. Characteristically, the scene of Koutuzov's farewell to his troops retains the considered heroic flourish and ignores the human afterthought.

Hacking their way relentlessly through Tolstoy's text, allowing dialogue and atmospheric detail to go by the board, the team of six writers have emerged with a solitary trophy: a coherent, workable story line. The director, King Vidor, attacks the film with the same bulldozing persistence: scenes are presented but never allowed to expand, the tone is heavy and impersonal, and during the first two hours of the film, taking us up to Borodino, one's main impression is of the lack of any dramatic pressure, any concern with what lies beneath the immediate surface. A winter troika ride, Natasha's shy hesitancy at a ball, her wan surrender after the betrayal by Kuragin—here, incidentally and momentarily, the film strikes some kind of note. Audrey Hepburn has the look of Tolstoy's heroine, the lightness and eagerness. The performance beguilingly takes her from smiling innocence to tearful innocence, but one remembers that Natasha also grew up, that Pierre, meeting her again, failed to recognise the girl he had known. Henry Fonda's Pierre, solemn and deliberate, represents a conscientious attempt by an intelligent actor; Mel Ferrer's Andrey, though, is inescapably lightweight, an officer, a gentleman and a nonentity.

After Borodino, with its impressively vigorous battle pictures, the film comes nearer to finding its own level in action. There are some finely desolate and misty snowscapes (the photography is by Jack Cardiff and Aldo Tonti), and the retreat from Moscow and the crossing of the Beresina are sombre military setpieces. The picture has still to weather a major piece of miscasting, in John Mills' presentation of Platon, the eternal Russian peasant, as a spry and cheerful little Cockney. But Fonda's bemused anguish, and a shot of the haggard, weary Napoleon incomprehensibly watching the wreckage of his army, bring the film at least within striking distance of the imaginative comment it has so consistently avoided. A final scene abruptly reunites Pierre and Natasha, and *War and Peace* fades out on an impeccable Tolstoyan quotation.

The approach, in fact, has been less that of an artist confronting an imaginative challenge than of a tactician dealing with a problem

in logistics. Character, warmth, the human and social scene, are the inevitable casualties of the operation: and at its best the film achieves no more than an impersonal thoroughness. Huston's *Moby Dick* is a failure at an imaginative level: Vidor's *War and Peace* takes the safer course of leaving imagination largely out of account. But the great nineteenth century novelists (adding Stendhal, Flaubert and Dostoevski to any short list) will always defeat the cinema; and where failure is inevitable, one is left only with questions of kind and degree. Hollywood found a solution of a sort twenty years ago, when a film like the Garbo *Anna Karenina*, for all its gimcrack vulgarities, could at least command one outsize performance. In *War and Peace*, though, the dramatic landscape is flat and overcast: the gulf between the subject and the talents engaged on it is too wide.

PENELOPE HOUSTON.

THE BATTLE OF THE RIVER PLATE

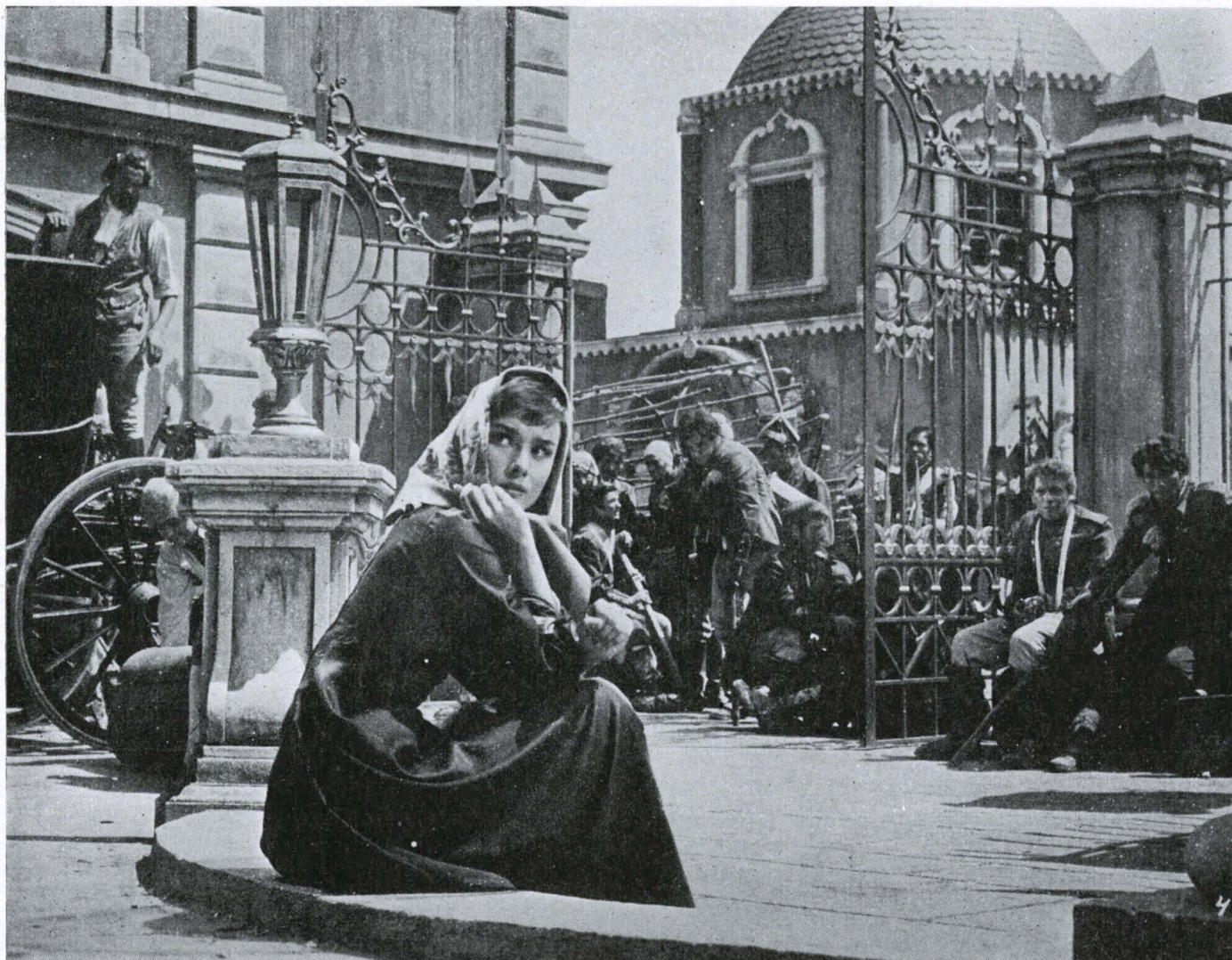
WHY do British film-makers revert so often to the War for inspiration, ten years after its end, and what need in their audience do these films, probably the most consistently popular output of British studios, particularly satisfy? These questions were prompted by the appearance of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's reconstruction of *The Battle of the River Plate* (JARFID), which marks a return to a "realist" subject after their excursions into the never-never land of Offenbach and Strauss.

Adopting a straightforward, semi-documentary technique, the new film traces the German pocket battleship *Admiral Graf Spee* through her battles with the British cruisers *Ajax*, *Exeter* and *Achilles*, satirises the diplomatic wrangles which followed the ship's seeking refuge in Montevideo harbour, and ends with the dramatic scuttling of the pride of the German navy. The events are real enough: their realisation tends to be cool and rather formal. Of all the personalities involved in the drama, the most compelling and perhaps the most tragic was the *Graf Spee's* Captain, Hans Langsdorff, a dedicated professional officer who tempered his allegiance to the German cause with a civilised regard for the rights of prisoners; and Peter Finch's strong and sympathetic performance manages to indicate these qualities. The producers, however, having decided that the battle itself must remain the central point of interest, have presented it inevitably from the British viewpoint, relegating Langsdorff to the background. At the *Graf Spee's* death he briefly reappears, a stern, defeated figure, accepting the condolences of a British captain with grave politeness—but there is no mention of his subsequent suicide. Having rejected this opportunity for a full-length character study, the film becomes a war exercise without a firm dramatic centre.

On a surface level, the result is serious and decent, if hardly new. Some beautiful seascapes (notably the opening shot), spacious VistaVision camerawork, a good deal of documentary attention to detail on board ship, and a reasonable simulation of the effects of shell fire, successfully fill in the background. The actual progress of the battle remains a little vague, where a more documentary use of diagrams or aerial shots might have made clear the relative positions of the cruisers. The ships' officers, types rather than characters, are competently portrayed in the service tradition. Anthony Quayle, as the Commodore in charge of the action, breaks rather uneasily away from the stereotype, with a performance that takes on a decidedly theatrical emphasis. His hearty asides, suggesting a certain schoolboyish glee in the panoply of war, disrupt the even tempo of a generally sober battle reconstruction.

And so the aftermath is reached. A high-powered American radio commentator describes the last hours of the *Graf Spee* against the hubbub of a polyglot café complete with leggy South American chanteuse; there is some talk of the "twilight of the Gods"; and Captain Langsdorff rounds off the story with a gesture suggesting honour to both sides. This final sequence achieves a certain tense authority—the massed crowds on the waterfront, the dark hulk of the *Graf Spee* moving slowly away from her moorings—though the film's methods are such that the emotions evoked are fundamentally exterior ones. Perhaps therein lies part of the answer to the question posed at the beginning of this review. The producers have taken great pains to be fair to both the British and the Germans—the film suggests that the conflict is conducted by gentlemen who observe the rules of the game. It is surely an ironic comment on the world today if audiences are now able to look back on the war, almost nostalgically, as a time when personal allegiances were firm and clear-cut, unsullied by the doubts and fears of an uneasy peace.

JOHN GILLETT.



"War and Peace": Audrey Hepburn as Natasha Rostov.

IL BIDONE

THE swindlers of Fellini's film—*il bidone*—are a gang of three: Augusto, withdrawn and weary; Picasso, a would-be painter, weak, and emotionally immature; and Roberto, sensual, opportunist and inescapably second-rate. They exist by playing elaborate confidence tricks on the poor and the credulous. Disguised as priests they spin yarns of buried treasure; as representatives of the town council, they collect deposits on non-existent flats from poverty-stricken slumdweller. Greed and hopefulness drive out suspicion, and the rogues drive off with their ransom money, scattering blessings.

Between these picaresque exploits Fellini scans a variety of social backgrounds; and the observation, as in *I Vitelloni*, is alert and penetrating. The most dazzling of these episodes, both technically and in wealth of detail, is a New Year's orgy thrown by one of Augusto's ex-associates. In this long virtuoso sequence, only two narrative points are made: the rejection of Augusto's attempts to link up with the big time, and the exposure of Roberto as the perpetrator of a clumsy theft. But the gallery of human meanness is extensively paraded and recorded with a lively spleen. Outstanding is the smart crook himself, bland, arrogant, relishing his contempt for women and his humiliation of men, and repellently well-played by Alberto de Amicis. In his entourage are a bedizened and ageing coquette (in whose car Roberto will later exultantly conduct the gang on their rounds), and a fleshy, concupiscent guest, heaving her way across the floor like a plump, plucked fowl. These and others are neatly and wittily skewered.

One is soon aware, though, of a typical Fellini dichotomy: one law for the bad and another for the good. While greed, lust and

general depravity are enthusiastically scrutinised, goodness remains merely an abstraction. In the ranks of the good, Picasso's wife is perhaps the most satisfactory portrayal, though the impression of depth derives from Giulietta Masina's clever playing rather than the script conception; even so, the character remains in essence the little woman who sees much but turns the blind eye of love. The English cabaret girl who befriends Augusto writhes seductively through her number, but can only lisp like a child when it comes to speech; Augusto's daughter is Griffith-sweet; and the agent of his conversion, a victim of infantile paralysis, is the simplest of all ("I am happy even when in pain"), effulgent in her cripple's chair because she has found God. Perhaps Fellini is content that this should be so, that decadence should evoke his shrewdest satire while good remains only a vague, symbolic and mystical force. But the effect, both here and in *La Strada*, is a disconcerting weakness in his exposition: while the parts are often fascinating, the whole seems implausible and disproportionately glib.

The last part of the film dispenses with Picasso and Roberto, as Augusto comes out of gaol and takes up with a new gang. Once more the *coup* of the priests and the treasure is essayed. Augusto has become increasingly discontented, not yet with his way of life but with his failure to achieve success in it. When the saintly cripple kisses his hand, however, the seed of conversion is sown. Driving back to town, he declares that he has refused the money on the grounds of conscience. (A brilliant literary stroke this, for, as it develops, he merely *wishes* he had not taken it.) The gang discover his deception and, in the way of martyrs, Augusto is stoned on the deserted highway and left to die on a rocky slope. All night his purification continues, as—in a sequence considerably cut in this version—he crawls agonisingly up the slope. Absolution



Ellie Lambetti in "A Girl in Black".

is granted only in the final shot: he gains the road and calls his dying words after a happy peasant family—"Wait, I'm coming with you". On a dramatic level (not perhaps on a Roman Catholic one), this sequence seems unwieldy and ineffectual. Augusto experiences no repentance until the final moments; nervous and strained when we first meet him, during the film's long action he merely sinks into a deeper weariness, a sheer physical lassitude in the face of professional failure.

Apart from this flawed climax, many of the scenes are recklessly over-loaded. The boredom of the successful crook's mistress, though merely a narrative 'aside', is investigated no less thoroughly than Augusto's reaction to his former associate's prosperity, which occurs in the same scene and bears directly on the film's core. And it is this unchanging dramatic emphasis, whereby essential themes are submerged for long stretches in the general scene, which destroys the film's rhythm and undermines one's interest in its situations.

Broderick Crawford creates a good physical image of Augusto, though both he and Richard Basehart, as Picasso, are handicapped by indifferent dubbing into Italian. Franco Fabrizi, one of the *vitelloni*, makes a wholly convincing Roberto, a glibly handsome and slippery fraud. Less successful than *I Vitelloni*, *Il Bidone* is still the work of a sharp and fascinating talent: how one would enjoy seeing such entertaining malice brought to bear on our own urban scene.

DEREK PROUSE.

A GIRL IN BLACK

A GIRL IN BLACK (Curzon) is the third and most considerable film of Michael Cacoyannis, the young Greek director who, after working for some years in England as an actor, has returned to Greece to write and direct his own films. It is a fresh, honest film with an ambitiously simple theme. Pavlo, a young Athenian writer, spends a holiday on the island of Hydra, in the house of a local family whose impoverished gentility has brought them into ferocious conflict with the harsh, intolerant village folk. He flirts with Marina, the daughter of the house, and she falls in love with him. Pavlo's immaturity makes him shrink away from any permanent relationship until an accident brings him into contact with the sort of reality that his life has lacked. The fishermen, who hate his intrusion into the life of the island, trick him into using a defective boat, in which Pavlo takes a group of children across the bay. The boat sinks and some of the children are drowned. This act of treachery brings the village feud out into the open and the young lovers are united.

The central situation of this tragic little tale is developed with

a fresh, tender perception and a simple intensity. The loutish, jeering young fishermen, the cruel little insular community which resents the intruders from the town, Marina's furtive meetings with Pavlo and her family's isolation from the community they live in—to all this Cacoyannis brings a bold and direct observation which makes the film exciting, often fiercely real. But the tragic impasse which is so effectively built up is never quite resolved. The episode of the drowning children—the film's least convincing sequence—seems arbitrarily interposed simply to provide Pavlo with an intense experience. And when, as a result of this, the lovers come together—in a single, rather tentative long shot—there is no sense of liberation; the film simply ends.

A Girl in Black was shot entirely on location and Walter Lassally's camera brings the island scene alive without giving us either picture post-card prettiness or the sort of crude snap-shot effects which have become fashionable in the more expensive Italian location films. Cacoyannis achieves his sense of locale not by thrusting local colour before us but by going close in to his characters and observing them with affectionate but unromantic eyes. Ellie Lambetti, a dark, fragile beauty, plays Marina with austere simplicity and a latent passion which reminds one of a younger Magnani; a performance which achieves much and promises more.

Despite its flaws, *A Girl in Black* is a film which, seen in the general context of Western film-making, carries much hope. It was made with a modest unit, on a small budget and without much of the technical paraphernalia which is accepted as essential in the major film-producing countries. Yet none of these things are limitations in the film: its means are perfectly in tune with its demands—the whole concept of "production value" is irrelevant to its style. It is because of this basic integrity of approach that Cacoyannis' three films—particularly when seen side by side with some similarly adventurous films from other minor film-producing countries—have an importance which goes beyond their own, often considerable, qualities.

KAREL REISZ.

In Brief

GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS (Eros). A Japanese science fiction film inevitably rouses a certain curiosity as to the brand of monster favoured by Asian film-makers. In the event, Godzilla turns out to be a cross between a tyrannosaurus, a large dragon and our old friend King Kong. Estimated as 400 feet tall, he roars like a lion, emits great quantities of fire from his ugly mouth, and occasionally waves his front paws in a pathetic, rather dazed manner. Emerging from Tokyo bay, Godzilla lays waste large areas of the city before being destroyed in an underwater ambush by a Japanese scientist armed with an agent designed to destroy the oxygen in water. Extensive special effects and model work help to create an authentic impression of chaos, as Godzilla rampages over skyscrapers, bridges and streets; and his final disintegration, amid a wild confusion of bubbles and thrashing limbs, is effectively managed.

Judged simply as another excursion into a gruesome fantasy world, the film merits little more attention than its American or British predecessors. However, an underlying note of social protest is apparent in the characterisation (the scientist is at first reluctant to unleash his terrible secret even against the monster); also, Godzilla's radio-active appearance is directly attributed to H-bomb experiments. A more obviously symbolic sequence shows a long line of maimed bodies followed by a children's choir singing a prayer for deliverance slightly reminiscent of the wonderful dirge in *Children of Hiroshima*. So this fusion of fantasy and reality inevitably harks back to the events of eleven years ago.

The film has reached this country in a curiously disjointed version, part Japanese and part American. Some of the scenes featuring the leading character—a bland, pipe-smoking reporter played by Raymond Burr—seem to have been cut into the picture after its completion. His melodramatic despatches from "Tokyo, Japan" strike a decidedly alien note, his only useful function being as commentator on occasions when the Japanese dialogue is not dubbed. The playing, incidentally, is rather naive by Japanese standards, with a hygienic, Westernised boy-and-girl romance. (Early hopes that the attractive heroine might be a potential Fay Wray are unrealised, as she is never allowed to meet Godzilla at close quarters.) All in all, an effectively savage addition to the cinema's repertoire of Things, and perhaps a slightly more disturbing sign of the times than most.

JAMES MORGAN.

THE SPANISH GARDENER (*JARFID*). Philip Leacock's new film, a study in the relationship between an embittered official in the Consular Service (Michael Hordern) and his young son, is very competently written and directed, and from the opening sequence its approach reveals an unusual sensitivity. In its development, the film offers few surprises. As friendship grows between the new gardener (Dirk Bogarde) and the child, the father's hostility towards the Spaniard increases, until he is ready to believe another servant's contrived exposure of the gardener as a thief. The final reconciliation between father and son, at the height of a storm, is rather artificially melodramatic, and more conventionally handled than the earlier scenes.

Michael Hordern's subtle performance provides *The Spanish Gardener* with a firm centre: his portrayal of the dedicated civil servant, tortured and baffled by his failure in both marriage and profession, is a considerable achievement. There is a gentle and likeable performance by Dirk Bogarde and some good all-round acting, though the decision to allow British actors playing Spanish peasants to retain their usual Kensington intonations seems more courageous than wise. Fortunately the Spanish qualities of the characters are not so essential as to make such contradictions disastrous. Leacock's direction of the young boy, Jon Whiteley, is predictably assured.

Yet for all the honesty of the script (an uncredited adaptation of a novel by A. J. Cronin), and the production's many worthy aspects, one is left feeling that opportunities have not been altogether successfully taken. There remains a certain coldness about the film, and its intimacy with its subject is never as close as one constantly anticipates. All the same, this quiet film is one of the more rewarding pictures to have come recently from Pinewood.

DEREK HILL.

Short Films

THE RED BALLOON (*Films de France*). The films of Albert Lamorisse all tell much the same story: that of a child and his companion (Bim, the donkey, Crin Blanc, the horse, or—a red balloon) at grips with the malice of "the others". Here a little boy finds a balloon. He wins its confidence, and it follows him faithfully wherever he goes. But the miraculous friendship must have its tragic ending, and a gang of urchins stone the balloon to death.

There is a certain ambiguity about the film, in that Lamorisse seems undecided as to whether he is addressing himself to children or to grown-ups. For the child's eye, Lamorisse has stylised his characters, presenting a world sharply and conventionally divided between the good and the bad. To attract the adult section of his audience, he emphasises formal effects, strives for a minute polish, spices his gags with a subtle element of malice. His characters move through the film along paths chosen solely for their elegance; their actions, expressed through superb images, often have little purpose other than to look "artistic". But the poetic qualities of a child's world lie, above all, in the spontaneity of its fantasy (in the cinema, of course, in the illusion of spontaneity); and it is precisely this quality that Lamorisse loses in the conscious over-elaboration of his images.

In spite of these reservations, *Le Ballon Rouge* is an unusually pleasing film. The colour is among the best the French cinema has produced; and the awakening of Paris in a blueish haze, the scarlet blob of the balloon caressing the crumbling facades of La Butte, are unforgettable images. One admires equally the skill with which the director has overcome the problem of "humanising" the toy. This has been managed without any tricks of editing, and the little boy and the obedient balloon appear together in the same shot. In *Le Ballon Rouge*, Lamorisse has attempted one of the cinema's most taxing subjects: the vague, marvellous territory of a child's daydreams. When he is able to put aside his present paralysing preoccupation with form, he will give us a true poetic film.—CLAUDE GORETTA.



"The Red Balloon".

THE HISTORY OF THE CINEMA (*British Lion*). Halas and Batchelor, whose own early work anticipated some of UPA's ideas, have drawn profitably upon the UPA manner in their new cartoon. A row of monks, with the look of figures in a *New Yorker* cartoon, emerge from sampling the *camera obscura*; a harassed inventor, enmeshed in a tangle of tubes and wires, displays a Steinberg profile. Economically designed, this account of the cinema's development is lightly satirical and agreeably urbane. A slight crudeness in some of the drawing, and a commentary insufficiently deadpan, muffle some effects. But most of the cartoon's best jokes are flippantly and accurately aimed to undermine pretension: the neatest, at the expense of wide screen advances, irrefutably makes the point that the more the film industry changes the more it remains the same.—PENELOPE HOUSTON.

THE STAINED GLASS AT FAIRFORD (*B.F.I.*). Sponsored by the Arts Council and directed by Basil Wright for the Realist Film Unit, this new British art film consists of an examination of the famous medieval stained glass windows at Fairford Church in Gloucestershire. Clean, unfussy photography in Eastman Colour brings out details which would pass unnoticed by the naked eye, and in view of lighting problems the paintings are remarkably clear. Connoisseurs of stained glass should find the panels particularly rewarding for their wide range of characterisation and facial expression, the sections dealing with the Day of Judgment and the descent into Hell conjuring up a nightmare world reminiscent of Bosch. John Betjeman's urbane commentary provides an ideal accompaniment to the somewhat austere images; relevant Biblical extracts are finely spoken by Robert Donat.—JOHN GILLET.



"Hôtel des Invalides."

Aspects of FRENCH DOCUMENTARY

by Claude Goretta

THE contemporary French feature film—or at least that section of the cinema which we regard as 'serious'—seems increasingly to be at the mercy of a kind of pessimism and bitterness, which manifests itself under the guise of 'realism'. Perhaps it is a result of censorship—which more readily allows criticism of individuals than of institutions—that this feeling is not a revolt (like Bunuel's or Vigo's) against the *status quo*, not the violence of a reforming, purifying zeal. It seems rather a general condemnation in the contemplation of a world bereft of hope. This display of distaste in the face of reality may seem courage to some people. To me it more often seems to disguise a commercial trick, a new way of tickling the masochism latent in every member of the audience.

To offset the pessimism of this kind of 'realism', French documentary production offers a much broader and more sympathetic vision. Here "realism" means a positive approach to life, free of any sanctimony. In the lucid, cruel vision of Franju or Resnais, we find again the accents of Bunuel and Vigo.

It is a commonplace that the maker of short films has greater freedom, and can express himself more spontaneously than the feature director. This is to attribute to the *genre* what is really achieved through the sincerity and tenacity of

the director. It is just as hard to maintain an attitude and a personality in making films sponsored by institutions and industrial organisations as it is in commercial features, where the producer may ask for a bit more leg-show or demand a happy ending. Georges Franju, for example, made an anti-militarist poem of his *Hôtel des Invalides*. Since the sponsor of this film was the Quai d'Orsay, Franju must have exercised considerable subtlety and self-discipline in achieving this.

2

Until 1953 the law in France indirectly protected short films by prohibiting the showing of two features in one programme. Then, unfortunately, this legal protection was done away with, and the double-feature re-established. It was to meet this threat to the existence of documentary that the Groupe des Trente was formed. This organisation, composed of producers, technicians and directors (among them Alexandre Astruc, Jean Painlevé, Alain Resnais, Georges Rouquier, Georges Franju and Nicole Vedrès), organised strong public protests, and their labours seem today to have borne some fruit. Very few cinemas now show the double feature programme, and at the same time the State has instituted a Loi d'Aide, providing for prizes to be awarded to films of outstanding merit. In 1955 140 million francs was awarded

in varying amounts of prize money to 80 short films.

In every variety of French short film, one finds the same concern to adopt a positive attitude towards reality, to re-establish man at the centre of things. Marcel Ichac and Jean-Jacques Languepin, for example, in their mountaineering films no longer concentrate on the effects of snow or the contours of rock formations, but rather on the efforts of the mountaineers in their fight with nature. Travel films are less concerned with facile exoticism. Accounts of polar exploration (Etienne Lallier's *Forceurs de Banquise*, Mario Maret's *Terre Adelie*, Marcel Ichac's *Groenland*) recreate with a new intimacy the solitary, often monotonous life of the members of the expeditions. In the ethnographical film—the work of Jean Rouch and Dominique Gaisseau, for example—the easily picturesque and sensational has been replaced by attentive observation. Yet these films never fall into pedantic scientific exegesis, for the film-makers possess, in addition to the faculty for minute investigation, a mastery of cinematic language. The term *avant-garde* has often been applied to films in which stylistic mannerism conceals the film-maker's lack of an idea. But is it not rather Gaisseau and his colleagues who achieved a real act of *avant-garde* in undergoing the 150 incisions of ritual tattooing which was necessary to give them *entrée* to the sacred forest to record the secret ceremonies of the Tomas of Haute Guinée?

Henri Fabiani first achieved notice when *La Grande Pèche* won first prize at Cannes. By that time he had made about thirty technical and record films, having entered the cinema as a documentary cameraman. *Les Hommes de la Nuit* and *Des Hommes Comme Des Autres* are reportages about the miners of the north. Fabiani is concerned with men's recognition of themselves. He emphasises the psychological factors in the rehabilitation of the injured, or the solitude of fishermen separated from their families for nine months at a time. His last piece of reportage, *Tu Enfanteras Sans Douleur*, a film about painless childbirth, has one of the most moving moments the cinema has yet recorded—the birth of a baby under the observation of its smiling, astonished mother.

3

We have said earlier that social criticism, implying as it does a revolt against the established order of things, has no place worth speaking of in the French commercial cinema. And it is becoming more and more difficult in the short film. Those who set out to devote themselves to such criticism find that they must either compromise—or find themselves without work. Resnais' *Les Statues Meurent Aussi* is still banned. After *Goëmons* Yannik Bellon made a film about Colette's houses. Elie Lotar has made no more films in the line of *Aubervilliers*; Mennegoz' *Vivent les Dockers!* can only be seen clandestinely.

The desolate landscapes of *Goëmons* recall *Man of Aran*. There the comparison ends. Yannik Bellon's feeling is infinitely more harsh and bitter than Flaherty's. She is more concerned to record the wretched and monotonous life of the seaweed gatherers than to elaborate an orchestration of Nature's wild elements. The film is a harrowing picture of a people for whom the inactivity of Sunday is only more disheartening than the brutalising work of the weekday.

Aubervilliers is distinguished by the compelling poetry of Jacques Prévert, who wrote the commentary. Its tender, violent lyricism is in effective counterpoint to Elie Lotar's brutal images. It is no cold documentation of a Parisian suburb, but harsh reality, selected and organised into a virulent tract, a cry of anger and pity at the spectacle of the children of the scabby slums.

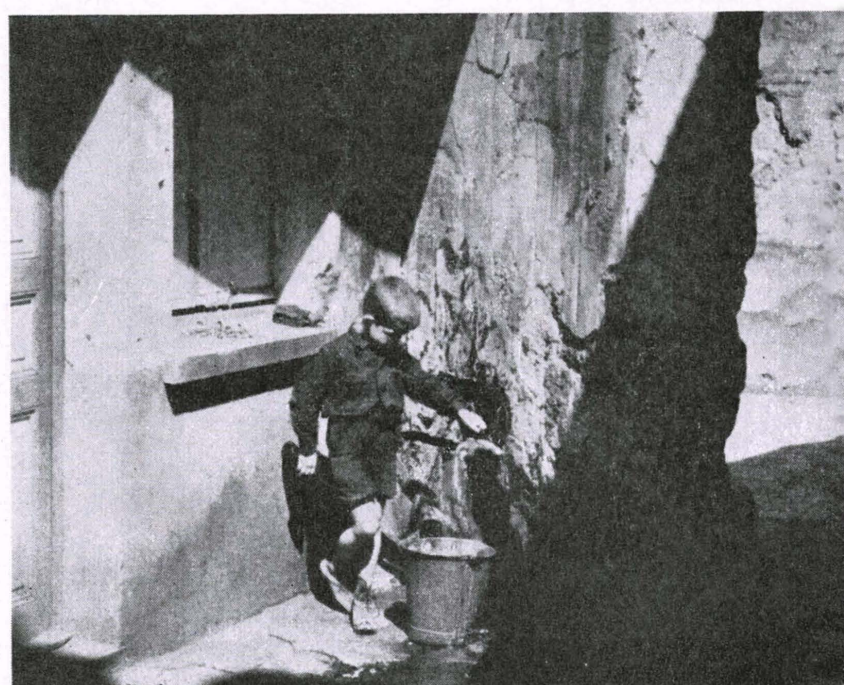
Mennegoz's *Vivent les Dockers!* and *La Commune* were made clandestinely, in a spirit of combat. Like the two preceding films, they are social documentaries of the sort

defined by Vigo: "It is distinguished from simple documentary by the film-maker's clearly defined point of view. Even if it is not the work of an artist, at least it is the work of a man". Robert Mennegoz is a Communist; and all his work is coloured by Communism. His account of the Paris Commune, for example, is wonderfully passionate—and incomplete. But for all his *parti pris* his films have a general significance; because to their political intent they add an honest realism and humanity.

Pierre Kast uses paintings to tell a story which is only remotely concerned with Art; his point of view is often surprisingly different from that of the artists whose works he uses. *Les Charmes de l'Existence*, which he made with Jean Grémillon, is much more than a chronicle of the *salon* painting of the period 1880-1910. The sarabands of naked ladies, the rustic idylls, the moustachio'd dandies, the chubby babies in bowls of flowers—this review of *La Belle Epoque* becomes in Kast's hands an ironic, satirical piece of social criticism. Kast uses his drawn or painted characters as if they were real actors. He animates them for his own purposes. Goya's etchings of the Napoleonic Wars in Spain gave him material for a vigorous tract against the atrocities and the *Désastres de la Guerre*. The rest of Kast's work confirms the satiric and acid temperament revealed by these early films. *La Guerre en Dentelles* (from Callot's engravings) takes up the same themes as *Désastres de la Guerre*. *Je Sème à Tout Vent* is a malicious portrait of contemporary civilisation, seen through the illustrations of a dictionary. *L'Architecte Maudit* is a melancholy evocation of the work of Nicholas Ledoux, an eighteenth century precursor of modern urbanism, neglected in his own day and forgotten now.

4

Each artist has his own way of expressing his sensibility. Nowadays Marcel Carné is content to film the glottis of a popular vocalist (in *Le Pays d'ou je Viens*). Franju's sensitivity is more disturbing. *Le Sang des Bêtes* has been described as sadistic and perverted because it examines in such detail the slaughterhouse of Paris. Such criticism mistakes indignation for sadism: Franju's film is a denunciation of the heedless cruelty of carnivorous man. The strange tone of *Le Sang des Bêtes* is as impressive as its subject. Franju created a stylistic unity between his record of the abattoirs and of their surroundings. He wanted, he declared, "to restore to documentary realism its expressive style, and to lend to natural décors the same significance as designed settings." To achieve this, he photographed houses head-on to destroy the appearance of solidity, and filmed the abattoirs in freezing cold, so that steam from the hot blood would give a diffused, unreal atmosphere to the images. The counterpoint of Kosma's gentle music against the shots



"Aubervilliers".

of carcasses being carved up; the contrast of the melancholy poetry of the exteriors, the comments spoken by a child, and the brutal frankness of the *reportage* inside the abattoir achieve a lyrical explosion which, Franju expressly states, "accompany a violent shock to the spectator". These oppositions, this use of the shock image, are to be found in all Franju's sombre and tormented work. In *En Passant Par La Lorraine* it lies in the menacing factories which stand in the middle of the cornfields.

But it is *Hôtel des Invalides* in which Franju's temperament finds its fullest expression. The film begins as a banal account of the War Museum; the camera circles a monument, wanders along the *quais*, pauses in front of an organ-grinder; it dwells unnecessarily on some architectural details. All this is preparation for the shock effect which is to shatter the spectator lulled into security by conventional views. "The legend has its heroes", says the commentary about a bust of Napoleon, but continues . . . "the war has its victims", as the camera turns to reveal a war victim being wheeled across a courtyard by a nurse. This shot sums up the film's whole intention. From this point on we are no longer taken in by the amusing shapes of the cannons, the carving in the armoury, the glorious trophies. We know that the other side of this glory is suffering and death. One amazing close-up shows a flag on which one reads 'Paradise lies in the shadow of sabres'. Franju is not concerned simply with the decorations of war, but with its shattered faces as well. If he lingers where others would turn away, it is because his artistic integrity will not allow him to ignore the tragic realities of warfare.

Le Grand Méliès evoked, with melancholy, the creator of the cinematic spectacle. Here again, Franju's keen sensitivity caused him to recall, in counterpoint to the enchanting images of *Voyage dans la Lune*, the tragic destiny which brought Méliès to his last employment—selling toys in a stall on the Gare Montparnasse.

Navigation Marchande, *Les Poussières* and *Le Saumon Atlantique* are less ambitious works; but each bears Franju's distinctive mark. *Mon Chien*, unlike the majority of the other films, is not a sponsored work. For a long time Franju had wished to expose the inhuman cruelties of the dog pound; as in *Le Sang des Bêtes*, he is impelled by an enormous tenderness for innocent creatures. He denounces the egotism of people who are amused by animals when they are tiny,

but abandon them when they grow big and cumbersome. Arrested for 'vagrancy', the dogs are taken off to the pound. The laconic commentary concludes with the words, "every year more than 4,000 dogs pass into the gas chamber or on to the vivisection table."

After Franju, it seems natural to discuss Rouquier—not just because they are close friends, but because their styles are so opposed that the differences serve as a means of definition. Franju uses long takes; movement takes place within the frame rather than in the editing. Rouquier on the contrary creates his rhythms by quick cutting. Franju is clearly influenced by the Scandinavians; Rouquier's masters are Eisenstein and Dovzhenko. Franju's work is tragic, shadowed by the presence of death; Rouquier's poetry is rough, serene, optimistic. In Rouquier's films death is a phenomenon quickly swallowed up in the vast cosmic action; the death of the grandfather in *Farrebique* is followed by the return of Spring, the rising of the sap, the birth of new loves.

The talent and conviction which Rouquier can bring to bear on the simple things and people of everyday life has been lavished, for a long time, on documentaries about trades, such as that of *Le Tonnelier*, *Le Charron* or *Le Chaudronnier*. In 1953, as an escape from this rut, he agreed to make a full length film, *Sang et Lumière*, from a somewhat dated novel by Joseph Peyre. Commercial obligations condemned the film to disaster from the outset. A carefully composed record of a bull fight could not make up for the inconsistencies of the script, or the unhappy casting of Daniel Gelin as the toreador and Zsa Zsa Gabor as his admirer. Rouquier returned to documentary.

Malgovert and *Lourdes et ses Miracles* wiped out the unhappy memory of this film. The emotional suspense with which Rouquier is able to invest the construction of a dam or the boring of a tunnel has only found its equal in the Russian cinema. After a moving account of peasants forced to quit a village which must be destroyed to make way for the new dam, Rouquier indulges his natural optimism and changes his mood to laud the work of the dam-builders. It becomes exultation at the struggle of the men on each side of the mountain, as they dig the tunnel which will bring water to the factory turbines at Malgovert. The tension mounts and bursts into a wild cry of joy as the two parties of miners meet. To create such emotion by such simple means calls for exceptional talent.

The making of a film about Lourdes offered great difficulties. The dual aspect of misery and commercial exploitation might have been a temptation to fall into sentimentality or misplaced irony. Rouquier chose to make a direct, objective record: "My taste has always been towards authenticity—more so with regard to this film than to any other." He looked and questioned, voluntarily effacing his own personality in the face of his subject matter. His method is not unlike that employed by Zavattini in *Amore in Citta* (with the difference that he employs it with a sincerity lacking in the Zavattini film). He compiles the elements of his enquiry: the testimonies of those who have been miraculously cured, interviews with the medical corps, *reportage* of the crowds. He gives a frank *exposé* of the religious phenomena. But he makes no judgment, leaves the spectator to his own conclusions.

5

In *Van Gogh*, Alain Resnais—using the technique developed by Luciano Emmer—penetrated into the pictures' world in search of the artist's unhappy destiny. In *Guernica*, by the same means, he used Picasso's picture, with other of his drawings, to probe the artist's hidden meanings. Revealing the emotions which were the artist's inspiration, he retraces

(Continued on page 166)



"Mon Chien".

Notes from Sherwood

LINDSAY ANDERSON

Sherwood in the twilight—is Robin Hood awake?

“WHAT FUN!” people exclaim—it is almost invariably the response—when I say that I have been directing episodes in the *Robin Hood* series on TV. I know what they mean, of course, but I cannot help wondering what they imagine such a job to be like. Do they think of a merry band of film technicians chasing around in the greenwood? Often they fail to connect it with the idea of a film studio at all. “Where do you shoot it?” they ask; and are surprised when the answer turns out not to be Sherwood Forest. Nor even Bagshot Heath.

Sapphire Films have been making *Robin Hood* stories for about eighteen months now. The series is presented by Hannah Weinstein, from America, with Sid Cole (from Ealing) as executive producer. Many of the scripts originate in America, but are rewritten in Britain, without any attempt to Americanise speech or attitude. There is a resident band of leading players; a stock company for supporting parts; and a small number of guest artists in each story. To increase speed and economy all the sets are designed from a set of basic components, mounted on wheels, which can be assembled in an infinite variety of combinations—Baronial Halls, Sheriff’s Castle, Taverns and Outlaw Headquarters. A main unit shoots in the studio; a second unit (working mainly with doubles) looks after exteriors. Each episode runs for just over twenty-five minutes, and is shot in five days. Of the fifty-odd episodes that have so far been made, I have directed five; and these brief notes are in response to an imperious appeal from the editor of *SIGHT AND SOUND* to say something about the experience. The responsibility is hers.

* * *

What fun, then? I usually counter this with the word *interesting*. From many points of view. And perhaps, since this is for the readers of *SIGHT AND SOUND*, I should start from the point of view of one who has himself done a fair amount of criticising. I will not pretend that this hasn’t its comic aspect. I have even felt a certain guilt to be writing severe strictures on de Sica and Zavattini in the evening, while knowing that next day I shall be struggling with a



Richard Greene (Robin Hood) and Zena Walker (Isabella of Angouleme) in an episode from Sapphire Films’ “Robin Hood” Series.

custard pie (or rather wild strawberry cake) routine between Tom the Miller and one of the Sheriff of Nottingham’s men-at-arms. This kind of schizophrenia is one of the first things one learns to live with.

The critical, film-appreciative half of one’s personality has, however, plenty that it can profitably note. This, after all, is the *inside* of the business that one has been criticising so confidently, from the *outside*, for a number of years. And it is fascinating to see one’s own clichés come to life. Film-making is a compound of “Creative Elements”; also it is the director’s medium—provided that the writer has given him the material to work with in the first place. Either you get something from your story or you don’t: and if you don’t, the work is very much harder. In *Secret Mission*, for instance, there was that scene where the Sheriff vainly attempts to persuade the outlaws to desert Robin, with the promise of a pardon. I liked that, and was even inspired to pinch a composition from *Wagonmaster* to go into it. (I doubt, though, whether Ford would have recognised it. Those “nobility” close-ups are harder to get exactly right than you might suppose.) On the other hand, in *Ambush*, I simply could not get myself to believe in Robin’s single-handed rescue of Marian and Prince Arthur from Prince John’s trap. It just didn’t seem probable. It was a difficult sequence to shoot.

* * *

A better word than ‘fun’, and better than ‘interesting’, is ‘experience’: this implies both pleasure and interest, and a lot else besides. Technical experience first. Work like this, with its tight discipline of cost and time (you must average about five minutes of screen time a day) must now be the



"Wild strawberry cake routine". James Hayter and Victor Woolf in "The Haunted Mill".

best training for full-scale feature film-making that exists. And when you come from documentary, you discover that there is a great deal of new knowledge to acquire. For instance, I had never before been able to indulge in the luxury of a dolly. My only tracking shots had been made from a conveyor-belt: or by Walter Lassally sitting on a chair, hand-holding the camera, while I pushed. I was therefore ignorant of the acute geometrical problems which even a quite simple series of camera moves can present. This was something for which Arnheim, Spottiswoode and Eisenstein had left me unprepared. I learned the hard way, with much scribbling on the backs of envelopes.

But I must not suggest that documentarists are callow innocents, with everything to learn from feature methods and nothing to teach. In high-pressure work like *Robin Hood*, where you frequently have no idea what the set is going to be like until you're on it, the impromptu methods of shooting which are necessary in documentary are very useful. It is more difficult to be impromptu in the studio, to keep that whole, huge, cumbersome machine sensitive and malleable. Studio work is a tougher grind than documentary, more nerve-racking, with more to go wrong and more money being wasted when it does. It is physically exhausting, and terribly hard on the feet. All the more reason, though, to struggle against the temptation (it is very strong) to hug convention; to play safe; to insist on a Mitchell when you could do it quicker and better with a hand-held Arriflex. So many of the rules are bogus: Cocteau's remarks about the futility of conventions (direct reverses, etc.) are absolutely true. Similarly, while many of the distinctions between documentary and feature filming are valid, there are quite a few that are worth contesting.

* * *

Technique apart, you learn a great deal about people. Why have so few writers on film-making managed to suggest the human richness of the whole business? Collaboration between artists and technicians: the challenge—and the difficulty—for the director to create a sense of *involvement*

for everybody on the floor. How do you make the lonely electrician, up there on his gantry, feel that he is part of the same effort as the camera operator and the star? There is material here for a study far deeper and more valuable than smart Miss Lillian Ross managed to produce from all that snooping round *The Red Badge of Courage*; but of course you would have to care to be able to write it. Consider merely the complications involved in asking the unit to work an extra half-hour on an early night: the director who worries about the sequence, the assistant who worries about the schedule, the art director who wants to start building tomorrow's set, the camera operator who has back-ache, the electrician who can do with some overtime, the clapper-boy who has a date, and the actor who was called for seven o'clock in the morning and not used till after lunch . . .

* * *

Personal impressions apart, it seems appropriate to suggest in these pages that television film-making deserves more attention from critics than it receives. About a series like *Robin Hood* for instance, most people seem to know little more than that American children have exchanged their Davy Crockett hats for Robin Hood fore-and-afters. Yet the enormous, impressionable audience that sees these films makes them of real importance—and not only in Britain and America. They are shown in Canada and Australia as well. They are even being dubbed for Japan.

Working on the floor at Nettlefold, wondering desperately whether you'll get the next shot before lunchtime, praying that this time the horse will not shift moodily just as Maid Marian is delivering her line (horses are the devil in the studio. But if you always dismount in the second-unit exterior, and walk into the studio shot, the thing just becomes too tame)—in the middle, as I say, of such toil and nervous strain, it is easy to forget or to joke about the vast audience you are working for. And it is true that the audience sometimes gives much less concentration than it gets. (No experience is more sobering than to watch someone watching on TV a film you worked very hard to make.) None the less, the viewing figures are there, and the values implicit in what you are doing are being absorbed by not hundreds of thousands, but millions of unreflecting, influencible minds.

I cannot pretend to be quite objective about *Robin Hood*, and I should be interested to read the thoughtful comments of a critic who can be. But I would say without hesitation that here is at least one series which entertains in a *good* way; which does not take itself too seriously to be humorous; yet is serious enough to insist on a decent moral, to forbid violence and human falsity. Most important, its success proves that the cheapjack policy of so many television producers is as shortsighted as it is socially undesirable. "It's only TV" is often said as a justification for shoddy workmanship, shoddy scripting, and schedules so cramped as to prevent director and actors even attempting to do more than get the clichés on to celluloid. *Robin Hood* is made for TV, but it is made as *cinema*. Its success proves that quality can pay.

* * *

A last note. Another thing I have learned is to understand why a director like Ford makes so many films—and doesn't much care if the critics say a lot of them are bad. He likes making films. He likes being on the floor. A unit is a good thing to be part of.

Book Reviews

SUNSHINE AND SHADOW, by Mary Pickford.
Illustrated. (Heinemann, 25s.)

THE SKY AND THE STARS, by Albert Préjean.
Illustrated. (Harvill Press, 18s.)

IT IS ALWAYS astonishing to be reminded how quickly the cinema industry has grown up. Mary Pickford and Albert Préjean belong to the same generation; both are just getting their second wind of life, as it were, in the role of parent. Yet both have literally grown up with the cinema; Préjean made his debut in a *film d'art*, *Les Trois Mousquetaires*; Mary Pickford started in 1909, before directors had thought of using scenarios, and when anonymity was the only comfort of artists who found themselves degraded to the galloping tintypes:

"Would you be very much against applying for work at the Biograph Studios, Gladdie" (said Mary Pickford's mother one day)

"Oh no, not that, Mama!"

The early years make the most illuminating part of Mary Pickford's autobiography: the struggles of the orphaned Anglo-Irish family in Canada; the fantastic courage and resolution of her mother, which were in large part inherited by Mary herself; the first-class professional training acquired between the Belasco theatrical company and the Biograph Studios, under Griffith. The association with Griffith must have been as instructive for the director as it was for sixteen-year-old Mary, who already had fixed ideas on her art:

"I will not exaggerate, Mr. Griffith . . . I think it's an insult to the audience"

" . . . This was only one of many things over which the great director and I squabbled. The argument usually ended with my quitting and being rehired a few hours later."

Sometimes the arguments ended more violently, as on the day the regal Griffith was assaulted by the two furious Pickford girls—Mary biting ("the first and last time I have ever bitten anyone") and Lottie hanging on to his back and dragging at both his ears.

From these years Miss Pickford's progress to the peaks of her profession was unimpeded, meteoric; and strongly linked to her polite determination constantly to better her financial status—a determination which began with the not unambitious aim of earning five hundred dollars a week by the time she was twenty. The screen character she created during these years was memorable, and was probably largely conditioned by her early private life. A professional woman and breadwinner at five, she never had a real childhood. But a childhood *par excellence* was fulfilled in her screen roles; and was prolonged for almost twenty years. With the childhood was prolonged the generous sentiment, the innocence, the infectious morality of the Victorian literature from which so many of her films were derived. When she cut off her curls and played *Coquette*, an era of innocence seemed at an end. ("I sometimes wonder whether I had the right to cut off my hair. Were the choice ever given to me again, I am positive I would not do it".)

Personally, Mary Pickford emerges as a woman of great character. Of her professional ability, Sam Goldwyn (for whom she lost little love) wrote: "There was no detail of film production which she had not grasped more thoroughly than any man I have ever talked to". Intelligent, forceful, shrewd, she has nevertheless preserved over the years an extraordinarily devout faith, alongside an overwhelming devotion to her mother's memory and influence. To anyone who has met her it is evident that there is neither hypocrisy nor self-deception about these feelings. At the same time, a quick sense of humour keeps her alive to occasional comic prudishness. As autobiographer she shows an admirable combination of frankness and discretion. About her own feelings and her private life—the unhappy runaway marriage with Owen Moore;



Mary Pickford with Anna Pavlova on the set of "The Thief of Bagdad", 1924.

the eventual failure of the idyllic union with Fairbanks; the success of her last marriage to Buddy Rogers—she is quite outspoken. Where the feelings and personalities of other people are involved, however, her admirable reticence is never calculated to arouse an indiscreet curiosity.

The same is hardly true of Albert Préjean's racy book, with its sharp but good-natured anecdotes—of the ageing Sarah, of Raimu's meanness, of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Barthelmess's solemn, solitary downing of Scotch, of Feyder's chilling rudeness. Préjean's autobiography is largely the story of four decades of French cinema—from *Les Trois Mousquetaires* and *Miracle des Loups* (with excellent anecdotes about the unfortunate wolves, who had actually died by the time their scenes were finally shot), to *Paris Qui Dort* and *Sous les Toits* and eventually to *Les Freres Bouquiquant* and *Le Désir et l'Amour*; from Martinelli, de Max and Diamant-Berger to Annabella, Simone Simon and Darrieux; Clair, Decoin and Daquin. Maddeningly ill-documented (there is hardly a date from beginning to end), this is nevertheless an amusing book; and it is a pity that in translating it Miss Virginia Graham has not succeeded better in assimilating French usages.

DAVID ROBINSON.

THE FABULOUS ORSON WELLES, by Peter Noble.
Illustrated. (Hutchinson, 25s.)

THE WELLES LEGEND has been with us for a long time now, and to know something about the man seems in a sense to know all: with Welles there are no half-measures. The knowledge of his mercurial career is part of film appreciation itself: his early Broadway battles with the American Federal Theatre; the *War of the Worlds* broadcast; *Citizen Kane* and the subsequent William Randolph Hearst controversy; the mutilation of *The Magnificent Ambersons*—the history of these incidents is firmly imprinted on the brain of every true cineaste. Again, with the possible exception of Garbo, no film personality can have been more thoroughly exploited by the press, have yielded more readable copy. In *Put Money in Thy Purse*, Michael MacLiammoir's stylish account of the filming of *Othello*, the devious facets of the Welles character were recorded to definite advantage; and we have had Roy Fowler's useful pocket biography of 1946. More recently Welles himself appeared before us via BBC Television, heartily to recount some of his adventures in *The Orson Welles Scrapbook*. Peter Noble's claim for "the first full length biography of one of the few

men in the theatre and cinema who can justifiably be termed a genius" already arrives a little late on the scene.

Not that this makes the book any the less readable or entertaining. Written in clean, journalistic English, it is obviously the product of much genuine enthusiasm and admiration for its subject. It contains a great deal of valid material on Welles, with some excellent gossip and reminiscences collected from his associates over the years (including his guardian, Dr. Maurice Bernstein, George Coulouris and John Houseman, from the Mercury Theatre period, Wolf Mankowitz and Laurence Olivier), as well as many details supplied by Welles himself. But despite this quantity of material, the overall tone of the book remains unsatisfactory. Mr. Noble is not a very acute analyst of style and behaviour, and his reluctance to commit himself to a firm, objective approach, to comment on Welles in terms of his uneven achievement, eventually brings the biography down rather to the scrapbook level. His facts seem impeccably correct, although he does err in suggesting that Welles directed, starred in and wrote *The Stranger*. The book is also extremely well illustrated, with one particularly taking photograph of a 16-year-old Welles driving a donkey cart. A final conclusion remains: that the essential Welles is as elusive as ever, a very much larger and more formidable figure than is contained in this new biography.

JOHN CUTTS.

FRAGMENTS: JANET HILLS, 1919-1956. With Photographs. (Privately Published, 5s.)

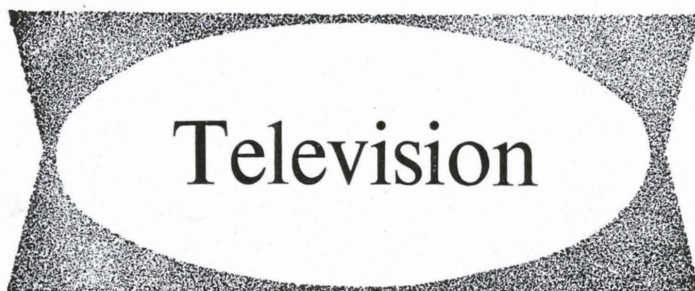
AMONG THE WRITINGS of Janet Hills here collected is the first chapter of her unfinished book *The Film at Large*. Her death last year at the age of 36 deprived us of a film writer who, though

the least dogmatic of critics, was nevertheless as resolutely committed as any, and the chapter now published is a sort of affirmation. All critics, she argued, are committed, not least those whose commitment is "a powerful mistrust of social purpose". Her own emphasis was on the interplay between film and audience. Adhesion to absolute standards of criticism in an art so popular and powerful as the cinema seemed to her an evasion and an oversimplification. (In the wartime poems with which the book opens, she wrote of those "who fought their soul to save their faith" in "the simplifying lie" of war.) Her own great merit was that she could write uncompromising criticism of popular films without the trace of a sneer. She took *Quo Vadis* seriously for the excellent reason that millions of other people took it seriously, pointing out that it could perhaps "usefully serve a faith which does not limit salvation to the artistically sensitive". So, although the criticism here printed or reprinted shows that she could write well about the best—witness the pieces on Bunuel and Chaplin—one of the declared purposes of her projected book was "to provide an earthly attachment for film criticism". She wrote of the need for "a kind of hybrid criticism which has a strain of the audience in it", and cited the Film Institute's late publication *Critics' Choice*.

The pieces collected here are by no means all sociological and never solemn. There are some flippant essays and frankly comic short stories, of which *The Passionate Pianist*, who killed her husband in self-defence for attempting to murder her piano, appealed to me most.

The collection has been privately printed from Cyclamen Cottage, Rodborough Common, Stroud, Glos., and is admirable in format. Single copies cost 6/- including postage; callers at the British Film Institute or National Film Theatre may purchase copies for 5/-.

STANLEY REED.



At the beginning of the Second World War, television was as snuffed for the duration. After the response of British television to the world events of October and November it seems inconceivable that such a thing could happen again. The skill and resourcefulness demonstrated by both services in their presentation of news and comment has suggested something of the potential importance of television as a national information and propaganda service unrivalled by any single newspaper.

Both BBC and ITV maintained a remarkable flow of up-to-the-moment news material which gave world events an unprecedented immediacy for the fire-side Briton. In itself the Egyptian fighting was unsensational; but news films of Franco-British preparations (quite simple pictures of troops and arms awaiting despatch from Cypriot airfields, for instance) brought ominous—and not unsalutary—reminders of the last war. More interesting still was the way television succeeded in bringing the viewer in close contact with the actual personalities involved in an action which revolved very largely about personalities. Hammarskjöld and Eisenhower, Nasser and Ben Gurion, Eden, Mollet and Pineau, the generals and the leaders became as familiar, and as apparently human, as the people next door.

The Hungarian revolution produced much more sensational pictures. At first one saw the triumphant insurgents kicking and beating to death Red Army soldiers who were luckless enough to have remained on duty in Budapest, and doggedly burrowing to dig out of cellars the Hungarian secret police who had hidden there. Then the first pictures of the Russian reinforcements, and the last of Nagy; and after that the endless—but none the less moving—records of refugees in their sad exodus across the bleak, foggy marshes into Austria.

It is hard to know where to give more praise for commenting the news: to ITA, who have not previously excelled in serious discussion (*What the Papers Say*, *Free Speech*, *Under Fire*, *This Week*), or the BBC (*Highlight*, *Panorama*, *Asian Club*), who have. *Panorama's* direct reports from Europe (by Eurovision link) and Middle-East film reports by Aidan Crawley were always worth watching and thinking about. *Highlight* (every evening) produced some exceptionally lively interviews with authorities on crisis matters; ITV's *This Week* provided even more vigorous (if less considered) discussions. But the most violent, enjoyable, and perhaps the most persuasive discussions have been provided by ITV's *Free Speech*. The highly skilled team of political debaters this programme has produced (W. J. Brown, Sir Robert Boothby, A. J. P. Taylor, Michael Foot, to read, roughly, from Right to Left) has often seemed to claw the air in the past. Given genuinely controversial subjects they have proved contentious and fearless: among other achievements, they were the only broadcasters unanimously to counter accusations of Soviet arming of Egypt with the reminder that Britain has supplied more armaments than any other country to Colonel Nasser.

The BBC's political impartiality has been both tried and assailed in the course of the crises. First came the doubts whether the Opposition would have an opportunity to reply to the Prime Minister's statement on Egypt (November 3rd). Had Mr. Gaitskell not been allowed his say, the fourteen-day rule could have operated to prevent the broadcasting of all but official pronouncements on an affair of national controversy. Later (November 14th) the BBC came in for open attack when Mr. Peter Rawlinson, M.P. complained in the Commons of the BBC's handling of the Egyptian crisis,

upon matters of emphasis, of selection, of nuance, use of adjectives and use of tone . . .

In particular he criticised *Panorama*, and referred to cases in which the Television News had omitted or distorted reports of applause for Sir Anthony Eden. As far as the News, in particular, is concerned, such charges of partiality seem wholly unjustifiable; nevertheless—though this may be imagination—they appear to have had an effect, in that the BBC news bulletins have seemed dulled subsequently by excessive discreetness. In the use of 'tone' both services have been impeccable, as far as an independent observer can judge. Not even the evident excitement and involvement of the more obviously enthusiastic ITV Newsreaders has led them to betray serious partiality at a time when passionless impartiality was the hardest attainment in the world.

DAVID ROBINSON.

Correspondence

"Stand Up! Stand Up!"

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND.

SIR,—You published in your autumn issue an article by Mr. Lindsay Anderson headed "Stand Up! Stand Up!" which proclaimed the need for seriousness and morality in criticism and especially in film criticism. Mr. Anderson took as his chief examples of work that showed a lack of these qualities the exhibition "Sixty Years of Cinema" mounted by *The Observer* and the writings of various contributors to this newspaper.

Mr. Anderson, of course, is fully entitled to his views; and you are equally entitled to publish them. But may I, please, be allowed to mention one or two small but relevant facts? Neither you nor Mr. Anderson mention that the selection of the stills which he criticises was almost entirely carried out by the British Film Institute. As SIGHT AND SOUND is published from the offices of the B.F.I., this seems a little odd.

Neither you nor he state that Mr. Anderson was one of this exhibition's official historical advisors. He was invited to participate in the production of one room. That room was found, by the process of observation, to be lacking in interest for the public, and after a few weeks it was regretfully scrapped: Mr. Anderson refers to this scrapping with judicial indignation, but without mentioning that he had shared in the creation of the room.

I certainly do not want to compete in giving lectures on seriousness and morality, but feel your readers ought to be clear about Mr. Anderson's special reason for feeling annoyance with this exhibition and your Institute's responsibility for some of the exhibits which he criticises.

22 Tudor Street,
E.C.4.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID ASTOR
Editor, *The Observer*.

SIGHT AND SOUND, as is stated on our contents page, is a magazine of independent critical opinion, and not an organ for the expression of official British Film Institute policy. Of his connection with "The Observer" Exhibition, Mr. Lindsay Anderson writes: "After agreeing to serve on an Advisory Committee on behalf of the Film Institute, I found myself so out of sympathy with the conception of the Exhibition that I asked for my name to be withdrawn. Similarly, in connection with my participation in the room mentioned by Mr. Astor, it was obvious after a discussion with Mr. Buckle that our ideas differed, and I asked that my name should not be used. But I was told that it was too late; the catalogue was already in the press, and my name in it. I do not feel that my involvement with the Exhibition was such that I could not properly make a comment on it."

Sir,—I was not surprised to see so much defensive attention paid in the press to Mr. Lindsay Anderson's challenge to the film critics in the last issue of SIGHT AND SOUND. His essay was, I think, by far the most important statement of principle to have been published in your Journal for as long as I can remember.

Mr. Anderson rightly exposes the dry rot that has overtaken much writing on film which follows certain cultural fashions, and the arty, still-born approach to the history of the cinema shown in many sections of *The Observer* exhibition. The essence of what Mr. Anderson says, and I agree with him, is that art (and film as art) can only possess real artistic values if the human, social values expressed are themselves enlightened.

All art is recreative. Films with a negative charge in them (such as *On the Waterfront*) may be technically brilliant, but if their general conduct and final resolution is inhumane in any fundamental sense, they cannot serve to re-create their audience. They retard the humanism which is the staff of our life. The "committed" critic is the one who observes these values as a natural part of his work. He is not primarily concerned with the aesthetic or technical trappings that the film may offer the audience through pictures on the screen or sounds on the track. He is first concerned with the human values of the film. The lightest-seeming film (or

novel, or play) can carry human values which by implication are as heavy as lead. Purely technical considerations matter only in so far as they add to or detract from the expressive qualities of a film.

Mr. Anderson tilts at "film appreciation" in an aside. (No one likes this prissy term any more than the dead word "documentary".) But there is surely no essential difference between film appreciation and film criticism. The "committed" teacher of film appreciation should be just as much concerned as the "committed" critic not to let the discussion of a film's technique and structure take the place of the fuller consideration of its values in the wider human sense.

Yours faithfully,

Hennerton Lodge,
Wargrave,
Berkshire.

ROGER MANVELL.

It was magnificent to read Lindsay Anderson's "Stand Up! Stand Up!" in the last issue of SIGHT AND SOUND. His very constructive analysis of present day film criticism and his affirmation of faith in the cinema as an art was well overdue, and I applaud his exposure of the prevalent shallow attitudes in criticism generally.

There is far too much pessimism in the press towards the cinema today, and most of it is due to "uncommitted" criticism, which does not attempt to encourage the creation of virile films reflecting contemporary struggles and ideas. If the cinema is to be taken seriously, the critic should surely be "committed" and should hold strong convictions about his attitude to religion, morality, politics and art. But if the critic claims to be nothing more than a kind of divining rod, how can he possibly hope to mould the shape and form of future film production? I would also suggest that every film critic might gain much by increasing his knowledge of actual film-making practice and methods, for without a real understanding of this the critic cannot influence the public or the film makers very deeply; and I believe the critic can be enormously constructive for both parties.

416 Fulham Road,
S.W.6.

MICHAEL STRINGER.

As a painter and director of an Art Gallery and Museum, I am concerned with exactly the same problems that Mr. Anderson discusses in his article. In the world of art, as in the cinema, the same state of "non-committed" criticism obtains, and with equally shocking results. In my opinion Mr. Anderson's plea for a re-assessment of values in criticism is of paramount importance, and cannot be broadcast firmly and often enough. It should be the job of the critics to clear up confusion instead of making it: to fight for standards instead of pretending they do not exist. To equate serious purpose with boredom, and principle with stuffiness and dullness, is as stupid as to equate excellence of execution with art.

I shall never forget a lesson I learned in 1939. Soon after the war started an English correspondent returned from Germany smuggling out with him a whole series of Nazi children's books—from picture books for 3 and 4 year olds to school books for adolescents. The standards of production—printing, paper, type, lay-out, the superb illustrations—were tremendously impressive. But directly one began to read and examine what was represented one sickened at heart. The implantation of hate into children (with which the books seemed mainly to be concerned) is as positive an evil as any physical torture humanity can devise. The better one does it, the worse it becomes. To implant contempt in, or take up a frivolous attitude about any form of art is productive of evil . . .

In quoting Alastair Cooke, Mr. Anderson shows him to be a non-committed critic. But at least Mr. Cooke has the honesty to say exactly where he stands. That is already something. That his criticism loses validity is true, but he himself gives one the clue: unlike most critics who do not, and who therefore begot and belittle their calling.

City Art Gallery and Museum,
Wakefield, Yorks.

HELEN KAPP

How committed should a critic be? Certainly not the non-partisan aesthetic judgment that Mr. Taylor advocates, for as Lindsay Anderson so rightly states "style and commitment are inseparable". In this phrase, I think, lies the answer. A film should be judged primarily from an aesthetic viewpoint, but this does not mean to say that it is a non-partisan viewpoint. The film-maker wishes to arouse in us the same reactions which inspired him to make the film. The intense pressure of his desire to communicate his feelings and his attitude towards his subject is mani-

fested in his style: and if our emotional and intellectual reactions are in harmony, no matter if our philosophy of life differs from that of the artist (although we will be agreed on fundamentals), then we will be in communion with him. If the film is sheer propaganda it will be reflected in the style and we will revolt not only intellectually but emotionally as well; similarly with films whose only pretence is a cheap, sickly sentiment.

But what about the vast majority of films which fall into a kind of no-man's land where the formula seems to be that of compromise—a compromise between the artist's own feelings and that dreaded ogre the Box-Office? The fact that these films have such a large following is a sad pointer to the mental state of the public, which exists at the moment in a kind of vacuum, not knowing what it wants to do or where it wants to go. These films provide an easy form of escape: they make a cheap appeal to the emotions with the added pretence of didacticism. They must be revealed for what they are—they are not worthy of serious criticism. Indeed most film criticism is not serious at all, but merely provides the critic with a chance to indulge in literary histrionics.

I believe that there is a growing feeling of dissatisfaction with the present state of affairs—a feeling which is strengthened by the questions on film criticism raised in the pages of *SIGHT AND SOUND*. Important changes are taking place, as John Maddison states, and now is the time for a new approach to the film bearing in mind problems that are both aesthetic and sociological.

3 Stafford Terrace,
Kensington.

M. I. BAILLIE.

Mr. Anderson's article begs, perhaps, as many questions as it answers. So much has been written and said recently about the need for "committed" criticism that people have almost ceased to ask "committed to what"? Mr. Anderson's article tells us at least what he is committed to, and for this we must be grateful to him. It does make one wonder, however, whether the whole question of committed criticism is not being given undue importance. If Mr. Anderson is saying that a critic must have a point of view—must have some moral preconceptions and personal tastes at least—one cannot but agree with him. Any critic worth his salt will inevitably be committed to *something* in this way, and it is certainly best to avow such commitments so that the reader knows where he is. On the other hand, does Mr. Anderson offer us any more than a short guide to his personal prejudices? And is not this in any case only a very subordinate, incidental aspect of film criticism?

The trouble arises, I think, from the efforts of critics to make the cinema appear respectable in the eyes of those intellectuals who have not yet learned to take it seriously. To do this many writers are driven to an almost apologetic approach: they soft-pedal the value and vitality of the cinema as an independent art with its own inherent aesthetic standards. Instead, the bait offered to the reluctant intellectual is the film's ability to deal with serious subjects. Rather in the same way, one might try to attract someone insensitive to poetry to the works of Shakespeare by stressing the subtlety of his characterisation or the interest of his social observation. It is *an* approach, certainly, but it does not take one anywhere near the centre of the mystery—indeed the mystery is ignored, as if it did not exist. The critics who, with the best possible intentions, take this line (and, *pace* Mr. Anderson, there are a considerable number) are in effect committing that worst of sins, for Mr. Anderson and myself alike—denying that the film is an art.

That the film is an art, I trust few readers of *SIGHT AND SOUND* would deny. And as an art it seems to me most closely analogous in its methods to poetry. Poetry is, in a sense, articulation: what the poem, or the film, says *is* how it says it, so that no text-book distinction between form and content is possible. To lay too much stress on the isolatable, paraphrasable *what* rather than the intangible, only with difficulty explicable *how* is to equate the film with mere journalism, reportage. Of course it is easier to be precise in explaining how a script fits in with a particular party-line, religion or philosophy than to explain why a certain sequence of shots has a certain emotional effect. This sort of *explication de textes* has no more to do, however, with the essential business of film criticism than criticising a poet's philosophy has to do with evaluating his poetry.

I am aware that at this point I represent a fairly extreme form of aestheticism in the criticism of art. But the approach is so out of fashion that restating it may have some value. In film criticism today there is implicit, I think, too wide an acceptance of what I called in my previous letter the "Newsreel Outlook": i.e., the view of film as a recording medium, reporting its material as unobtrusively as possible and relying on the inherent strength of

the material to come over. For the aesthete, this is a betrayal of the whole idea of film art—the film, like the poem, should pick its theme and articulate it in such a way that, to quote Dreyer, "no detail could be altered without destroying the whole".

For the aesthetic critic any subject or approach is permissible, since the vital factor is not what it means to him but what it means to the creator (it is the creator's job to make it mean something to the spectator). Not being committed to any special system of ideas, he can accept a wide range of initial subject matter and attitude: the humanity and gentle lyricism of the Gorky trilogy as well as the Nazi ideology of *Olympische Spiele 1936*; the films of Cocteau, with their hermetic private world; those of Bunuel, with their equally eccentric preoccupation with Sadique themes. To take a crucial example, *Le Journal d'un Curé de Campagne*: one may be strongly opposed to the particular aspect of Roman Catholic thought exemplified in the film, and yet regard it as one of the few perfect masterpieces of film art in its Racinian concentration and discipline, its mastery of what Bresson has called *écriture*—writing in terms of film.

In discussing a work of art, the separation of style and content is not only naive; it is impossible. In the work of a technician, however skilled and ambitious he is, the distinction remains valid. But for the creative artist each subject creates its own style, or rather the creator, in choosing his subject, has dictated to him the style in which it shall be treated, because he can only conceive the subject filmically in those terms. It is on this level alone that the word "sincerity" has any meaning in criticism: as integrity of personal vision, and truth to this vision in all its simplicity or all its complexity . . .

Of course this is demanding the highest possible standard of criticism for the film—and extraordinary discipline and open-mindedness of aesthetic response in the critic, with no consolation prizes for good intentions—but then it is insulting to both to ask for less. Mr. Anderson has shown himself as aware as any of the true *Poesie du cinéma*, the haunting obsessive quality which comes from the clear projection of a personal vision of things, however remote that vision may be. "Poetry *is* what we need now", and it would therefore be a pity if Mr. Anderson's article should lead critics and filmgoers too far among the tempting irrelevancies of "committed criticism", to the neglect of a vital and searching inquiry into the inherent aesthetic standards of judgment in the film as an art form.

Shakespeare Road,
Dover.

J. R. TAYLOR.

Lindsay Anderson's tirade "Stand Up! Stand Up!" was timely and welcome, and yet sad. It is sad that *SIGHT AND SOUND* needs to trumpet loud the tune it has played for some years; that films must be personal and pregnant, that style, beyond proficiency, is no more than useful, that the people who make films are less important than the people films are about. (The fairest critic in the land, who is Dilys Powell, manages to criticise by these standards but to keep them implicit.) . . .

38 Red House Lane,
Bexleyheath, Kent.

CLIVE R. DENTON.

A Narrow Front . . .

SIR,—One can't (and doesn't want to) please everybody all the time. It seems to me this is what, in his Open Letter in your autumn issue, Mr. John Maddison is asking *SIGHT AND SOUND* to do. The result of a journal "fully representative" of the British Film Institute's ideals would be, I respectfully suggest, a formidable mish-mash.

You can have two sorts of film magazine. It can be comprehensive, impersonal, slanted in the UNESCO 'mass-communications' sense; or it can be personal, non-comprehensive, reflecting the preferences and limitations of its editor. The first (which would probably, by the way, demand more material resources than *SIGHT AND SOUND* enjoys) would be from an informational point of view more broad and sound; the second would be more personally involved, and perhaps more provoking and stimulating. I don't believe you can successfully combine both approaches.

Soon after I began editing *SIGHT AND SOUND* I put this point of view to the Editorial Board, saying that the Institute could either sponsor an organ of itself, reflecting its diverse activities and

followers, or publish an independent-minded periodical on the art of the cinema. The latter was agreed on, and what I tried to do was to collect good critical writing on films of creative imagination, past and present, and to give a general picture of where, imaginatively, the cinema had been and was still going.

Now Mr. Maddison calls the feature film a "narrow front". From what point of view? Is a front that includes Griffith and Pudovkin and Mizoguchi and Ford and Vigo and Dovzhenko and Clair and Stroheim and Renoir and Hitchcock and Dreyer and Bunuel and Welles and Eisenstein and Lang and de Sica and Chaplin a narrow one? Is it just a collection of "well-established movie conventions"? Does it reflect a shortage of subjects and styles? And has Mr. Maddison found, in the discussion of these artists, an ignorance of the conditions under which they worked and how this affected them?

From time to time a rather awful snobbishness breaks out among documentarists and their followers. It is apparently shared by Mr. Maddison and reflected in the remark of Mr. Salter's that he quotes: "real people caught in the business of living real lives" is the latest definition of 'documentary' that he brings up, with the proviso that this opposes it to the fiction film—which, by implication, can never get so close to reality or truth. But the fact that *Thursday's Children* is a better film than *Mandy* proves nothing. *L'Atalante* is better than *Inland Waterways*, and *Los Olvidados* than *Children on Trial*.

I don't want to suggest I think SIGHT AND SOUND has been infallible, that it hasn't had its lapses and blind spots. Of course it has. Franju is a case in point, and there are many others. Also, my own personal preferences, while not leading the magazine to neglect 'documentary', I believe, to the extent Mr. Maddison suggests, has led it to enthuse mainly on the dramatic kind—from Jennings to *On the Bowery*, from *The Great Adventure* to *Nuit et Brouillard* and *O Dreamland*—and to pay little attention to the instructional film which, as Mr. Maddison says, may be admirable and more intrinsically valid than many feature films. What I disagree with is the deductions he draws from this.

First of all, he claims that by neglecting these films SIGHT AND SOUND has failed to achieve the wide cultural outlook of "those serious papers which discuss the total creative product of the printed word." Isn't Mr. Maddison really asking for the *Times Literary Supplement*, as it were, to combine with the *Educational*? The parallel with the book columns of *The Listener* is inaccurate. If SIGHT AND SOUND reviewed all the films Mr. Maddison wants it to, or discussed their problems, it would be concerning itself with the equivalent of school textbooks and the techniques of scientific manuals, which *The Listener* does not.

And then, in Mr. Maddison's sense, 'documentary' is a dead donkey. By this I mean the concept of 'documentary' as opposed to that of the fiction or feature film is meaningless, and not all the re-definition in the world can make it anything else. Documentary existed before 'documentary'. It started when the cinema started—earlier, even. It is in Brady's civil war photographs; in the 1896 film of Paris when a Frenchman took his camera all the way up the lift in the Eiffel Tower; in *October* (wedded already to 'fiction') and in *Nanook*. And there has been a great deal of documentary since 'documentary', notably in the postwar Italian cinema.

The important distinction is not between the slick feature and the vital reportage, but surely between the living and the dead, the true and the false, in any form or style. To say that one kind of style is more truthful or significant than another is critically presumptuous. There is room for both *Zéro de Conduite* and *Children at School*, and one doesn't cancel out the other. The sooner we stop affixing justificatory labels like 'documentary' and 'neo-realism' the better; there is as much difference, in their own way, between *Song of Ceylon* and *Housing Problems* as between *La Terra Trema* and *Bicycle Thieves*.

In this sense there should be no division, either, of aesthetic and social principles. The point is explored by Lindsay Anderson in his fine article *Stand Up! Stand Up!* "Criticism cannot exist in a vacuum." You break the vacuum not by systematising styles or movements and enunciating principles of 'truth' from them, but by looking for truth imaginatively stated in any form.

I haven't read *Thin Ice* (though I have, as it happens, read Mr. Edmund Wilson's book) and I don't understand what Mr. Maddison is saying here. That a first-rate book of reportage is better than a second-rate novel? Well, obviously. That Mr. Wilson is a better writer than Mr. Mackenzie? If so, this doesn't prove reportage intrinsically superior to the novel. Of course, if I like novels better than travel books, I am likely to neglect a good travel book for a less good novel. But I don't think it less human,

or moral, or bad for my broad cultural outlook, to admit quite frankly that I would be more interested in a sex drama of the sidewalks (if it's good) than in an account, however accomplished, of the economics of automation. And I'd give it more space.

Yours faithfully,

GAVIN LAMBERT.

8221 Sunset Boulevard,
Hollywood 46.

Berlin Awards

Sir,—Writing with more heat than accuracy about the Berlin Festival Awards in the last issue of SIGHT AND SOUND, I said that Finland's remarkable war film *The Unknown Soldier* had received no official recognition. Miss Marvynne Butcher of *The Tablet* has written to remind me that the film did in fact receive the award of the Office Catholique Internationale du Cinéma. I am grateful to Miss Butcher for this correction, and for the chance to admit it in this issue.

Yours faithfully,

DEREK PROUSE.

13 Wyndham Place,
W.1.

"Together"

Sir,—For some time I have been conscious of an injustice in the credit titles of *Together*, which attribute the creative responsibility for the film entirely to myself. Denis Horne had himself asked to be excluded from the production credit, if any, but as he was then absent in Italy he had no opportunity of seeing the form of titles finally chosen by the editors, and it has been impossible for me to change these until now. In fact *Together* could not have been conceived or shot without his active collaboration, and for this reason the first title has now been amended to read "a film by Lorenza Mazzetti and Denis Horne". The direction credit is similarly shared.

In view of the kind attention which has been paid to *Together* in SIGHT AND SOUND, I should be grateful if you could find space to note this amendment in your pages.

Yours faithfully,

LORENZA MAZZETTI.

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In designing the theatre, the architect in charge, Mr. N. W. Engleback, A.R.I.B.A., has, he says, approached the problems "fundamentally"—discarding, or rather ignoring such traditions in cinema design as exist. Yet, although he is apparently unaware of Ben Schlanger's researches and designs, Mr. Engleback's "fundamental" approach has brought him surprisingly near the conceptions the Schlanger school has tried to impose on American cinemas. The form of the auditorium is as simple as it could be: in shape, plan, acoustic treatment and decoration it is entirely subordinated to the film on the screen. The only deliberately decorative feature seems to be the arrangement of the screen tabs—a coloured metal grille which crawls round the front of the screen rather on the principle of a roll-top desk. This elaborate feature seems slightly out of keeping with the functional elegance and restraint of the rest of the design. However, Mr. Engleback says: "For me, this is the most interesting thing in the theatre".

The new cinema will make, it seems, no special contribution to the problems of the most suitable auditorium light level during performance or the ideal masking of the screen. Of these problems, Mr. Engleback says: "I always thought the best thing was to have the pictures as bright and the cinema as dark as possible. Anyway, I've fitted dimmers, so the projectionists will be able to please themselves . . . I have made the masking black; I have always understood that to be the best".

It is reasonable to hope that the new National Film Theatre may go further than any previous cinema in this country towards providing the ideal "machine for looking-at-films in". Its designers have had all the advantages and disadvantages of having no existing tradition to influence them; and their theatre may yet help to establish a genuine school of British cinema design.

(FRENCH DOCUMENTARY, continued from page 158)

a sort of genesis of the work. The commentary—a poem by Eluard, spoken with restraint by Maria Casarès—admirably supplements the force of the images.

Les Statues Meurent Aussi, made in collaboration with Chris Marker, won the Jean Vigo prize in 1954; but its anti-colonialist bias earned it a censor's ban. Resnais adduces an admirable defence of the theory of the decadence of negro art, following its contact with western civilisation. What seems particularly to have affected the censors was the too brutal and frank account of the working conditions of the negroes, despised and exploited by white men. In a percussive montage sequence, Resnais substitutes for the beating of the drums the truncheons of the police striking the skulls of negroes. Louis Marcorelles has already written in *SIGHT AND SOUND* about Resnais's shattering report on concentration camps, *Nuit et Brouillard*. It is not necessary to say anything more about it here, except to hope that this film, conceived by its authors as a *dispositif d'alerte*, will reach the widest possible audience; for the horror of the images gives place to a profound disturbance, a personal heart-searching on the part of every member of the audience.

Many key names are missing from this brief look at the French short film scene. I hope that the few directors I have cited will give an idea of the variety of styles and temperaments at work in this vital French school, distinguished, in the words of the declaration of the Groupe des Trente, "by its style, its methods and by the ambitious range of its subjects".

ALEXANDER DOVZHENKO

THE death of Alexander Dovzhenko on November 25th, at the age of 62, deprives the Soviet cinema of the last great representative of its elder generation of film-makers (Eisenstein died in 1948), Pudovkin in 1953). Dovzhenko's most celebrated silent films included *Zvenigora*, an allegory of Ukrainian history; *Arsenal*, a massive revolutionary fresco rich in poetic symbolism; and *Earth*, that visionary masterpiece impregnated with the spirit of his beloved Ukraine. It is a pity that few of Dovzhenko's sound films are known in the West, for *Aerograd* (1935), *Schors* (1939) and the wartime documentaries he supervised for the Central Newsreel Studios, Moscow, revealed not only a remarkable fluency in handling mass movement, but also a deep awareness of the anguish caused by war. His post-war tribute to *Michurin* was marred by much rhetorical propaganda, although it contained several characteristic scenes. After a long period of inactivity, he recently began work on *The Poem of the Sea*, a large scale construction epic shot for wide screen.

With Dovzhenko's death, the cinema has lost a true poet and one of its most individual and uncompromising artists.

HAROLD LEONARD

As we go to press, we learn of the death, on November 10th, 1956, of Harold Leonard, who had for some years been *SIGHT AND SOUND*'s Hollywood correspondent. Mr. Leonard, who was 47, was a faculty member of the Theatre Arts department of the University of California, editor of the monumental *Film Index—The Film as Art* and a leading authority on the Japanese cinema. An appreciation will appear in our next issue.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Stills:
WARNER BROTHERS for *Moby Dick*, *Giant*, *Baby Doll*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Dust Be My Destiny*.
METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER for *The Teahouse of the August Moon*, *Blackboard Jungle*, *Somebody Up There Likes Me*.
COLUMBIA PICTURES for *Full of Life*, *Joe Macbeth*.
PARAMOUNT PICTURES for *The Buster Keaton Story*.
J. ARTHUR RANK FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *The Man in the White Suit*, *On Approval*.
BRITISH LION for *A Kid for Two Farthings*, *The Happiest Days of Your Life*.
ASSOCIATED BRITISH-PATHE for *War and Peace*.
ALLIED ARTISTS for *Love in the Afternoon*.
NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE for *Dreigroschenoper*, *Kuhle Wampe*, *Somewhere in Europe*, picture of Mary Pickford.
HUNGARIAN STATE FILM for *Pioneers*, *Mr. Hannibal*, *Ward No. 9*, *Georges Dandin*, *Discord*.
CZECHOSLOVAK STATE FILM for *Jiri Trnka's Puppets*.
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CORRESPONDENTS

ITALY: Robert Hawkins
FRANCE: Louis Marcorelles
SPAIN & PORTUGAL: Francisco Aranda
GERMANY: Werner Zurbuch

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A GUIDE TO CURRENT FILMS

Films likely to be of special interest to *SIGHT AND SOUND* readers are denoted by one, two or three stars.

ABDULLA THE GREAT (*Independent/British Lion*) Expensive rigmarole about a merry, vaguely Eastern monarch's passion for retiring English model. Mixture of revolutionary fervour and familiar farce seems finally tasteless. (Gregory Ratoff, Kay Kendall; director, Gregory Ratoff. Technicolor.)

AUTUMN LEAVES (*Columbia*) Highly coloured pulp fiction about a middle-aged typist's emotional difficulties with her psychopathic husband. Joan Crawford copes valiantly. (Cliff Robertson, Vera Miles; director, Robert Aldrich.)

BABY DOLL (*Warners*) Kazan more truly at grips with his characters than for some time, in a Tennessee Williams story specially written for the screen. Finally flawed to pass the censors but still compelling, with outstanding playing by Eli Wallach and Carroll Baker. *Reviewed.* (Karl Malden.)

BATTLE OF THE RIVER PLATE, THE (*JARFID*) Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's reconstruction of the naval action and scuttling of the *Graf Spee*. Sober semi-documentary treatment, at some sacrifice of dramatic drive. *Reviewed.* (John Gregson, Peter Finch, Anthony Quayle. Vista-Vision, Technicolor.)

BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE FREE, THE (*Fox*) Amiable 'twenties musical with standard show business background, enlivened by a parade of vintage songs and some sharp humour. (Gordon MacRae, Dan Dailey, Ernest Borgnine, Sheree North; director, Michael Curtiz. CinemaScope, Eastman Colour.)

BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL (*Fox*) Adaptation of novel by Francis Gwaltney about a young Southern soldier's battle experiences, which changes the novel's social message for a popular exercise in war heroics. (Robert Wagner, Terry Moore, Broderick Crawford; director, Richard Fleischer. CinemaScope, Eastman Colour.)

CHECKPOINT (*JARFID*) Thriller with a motor-racing background, in which big race competitor finds that his co-driver is a killer on the run. Far-fetched melodrama; Italian locations. (Anthony Steel, Odile Versois, Stanley Baker; director, Ralph Thomas. Eastman Colour.)

CHNOUF (*Gala*) Another dose of French mayhem—drug addiction, vicious killings, hints of perversion—inventively handled by Henri Decoin. Gabin once again tough and implacable as an undercover agent. (Magali Noël, Marcel Dalio.)

CINERAMA HOLIDAY (*Cinerama Productions*) Nothing here is as impressive as the celebrated aeroplane tour in *This is Cinerama*, but the extended large-screen travelogue has its striking and effective episodes. (Directors, Robert Bendick, Philippe de Lacey. Technicolor.)

DAVY CROCKETT AND THE RIVER PIRATES (*Disney*) The intrepid frontier scout wins a Mississippi keel boat race and captures a pirate gang. Enjoyably extrovert adventures, boisterously played. (Fess Parker, Jeff York; director, Norman Foster. Technicolor.)

FRIENDLY PERSUASION (*M-G-M*) William Wyler's study of a Quaker family at the time of the Civil War. Some facile comedy at the expense of Quaker customs, homespun atmosphere, sympathetic playing by Anthony Perkins and Phyllis Love. (Gary Cooper, Dorothy McGuire. De Luxe Color.)

GERVAISE (*Miracle*) Aurenche and Bost adaptation of Zola's *L'Assommoir*, directed by René Clément. A *tour-de-force* of literal realism, crushing in its merciless assertion of the degradation of unhappiness. *Reviewed.* (Maria Schell, Francois Perier, Suzy Delair.)

GIANT (*Warners*) George Stevens' outsize screen version of Edna Ferber's novel about Texas. A very solid piece of film-making, with many elements of the conventional Hollywood "epic" but some outstanding qualities. *Reviewed.* (Rock Hudson, Elizabeth Taylor, James Dean. WarnerColor.)

GIRL IN BLACK, A (*Curzon*) Michael Cacoyannis' new film of strong passions on a Greek island is probably his most considerable achievement to date. Commanding performance by Ellie Lambetti; airy, sun-filled photography by Walter Lassally. *Reviewed.* (Dimitri Horn, Georges Foundas.)

GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS (*Eros*) A 400-foot monster, activated by the H-bomb, lays waste large areas of Tokyo. Lively Japanese science fiction; puerile American dubbing. *Reviewed.* (Raymond Burr; directors, Terry Morse and Ishiro Honda.)

GRASSHOPPER, THE (*Contemporary*) Perceptive, sensitively played adaptation of Chekhov's story by a new Soviet director, Sergei Samsonov. Superb atmosphere and acute feeling for the Chekhov mood. (Ludmila Tselikovskaya, Sergei Bondarchuk. Agfacolor.)

GUYS AND DOLLS (*M-G-M*) Adaptation of the stage musical, with length and size having a slightly crushing effect on the story's casual charm. Sympathetic playing by Marlon Brando, a high-calibre score, and some cleverly staged numbers. (Jean Simmons, Frank Sinatra; director, Joseph L. Mankiewicz. CinemaScope, Technicolor.)

HIGH SOCIETY (*M-G-M*) Musical remake of Philip Barry's *The Philadelphia Story*, striking an uneasy balance between the original's smooth sophistication and the new trappings of VistaVision, colour and Louis Armstrong's band. Standards of playing set by the Hepburn-Grant-Stewart team remain unchallenged. (Bing Crosby, Grace Kelly, Frank Sinatra; director, Charles Walters. Technicolor.)

HOLLYWOOD OR BUST (*Paramount*) Martin and Lewis's sixteenth and last film endeavours to fill out thinnish material with VistaVisioned and Technicolored showgirls, Anita Ekberg and a tour of the Grand Canyon. Lewis and a large dog have their moments. (Director, Frank Tashlin.)

KING AND I, THE (*Fox*) Adaptation of Rodgers and Hammerstein musical about the Victorian lady at the court of Siam. Treatment very stage-bound, but enlivened by Jerome Robbins' choreography, Irene Sharaff's gay costumes and Yul Brynner's authoritative playing. (Deborah Kerr; director, Walter Lang. CinemaScope 55, Eastman Colour.)

LOSER TAKES ALL (*British Lion*) Graham Greene's venture into inconsequential comedy (currency starved lovers, roulette at Monte Carlo) is here dehydrated by over-lavish production treatment, CinemaScope, Eastman Colour, *et al.* (Glynis Johns, Rossano Brazzi, Robert Morley; director, Ken Annakin.)

LOVE ME TENDER (*Fox*) Unlikely Civil War Western, distinguished by the first appearance of Elvis Presley. His singing style, though probably an acquired taste, is not without its charm. (Richard Egan, Debra Paget; director, Robert D. Webb. CinemaScope, black-and-white.)

MAM'ELLE STRIPTEASE (*Miracle*) Drearily naughty French comedy, with much stripteasing, heavy direction and an over-exposed Brigitte Bardot. Darry Cowl provides an entertaining cameo as a taciturn museum guide. (Daniel Gelin; director, Marc Allegret.)

MOBY DICK (*Warners*) John Huston's ambitious adaptation of Melville's classic succeeds on a surface level (excellent seascapes, finely controlled colour) but misses most of the original's mystical and visionary power. *Reviewed.* (Gregory Peck, Richard Basehart, Leo Genn, Orson Welles. Technicolor.)

OKLAHOMA! (*R.K.O.*) Outsize version of the stage show: handsome Arizona locations, straightforward playing by Gordon MacRae and Shirley Jones, melodramatic interventions from Rod Steiger, marathon dream ballet. (Gloria Grahame, Charlotte Greenwood; director, Fred Zinnemann. CinemaScope, Eastman Colour.)

SILENT WORLD, THE (*JARFID*) Fascinating underwater explorations by Cousteau and Malle, with virtuoso camerawork and excellent deep sea Technicolor. Highlights include the surveying of a sunken ship, a battle with sharks and much vivid plant life.

SPANISH GARDENER, THE (*JARFID*) A. J. Cronin's story of conflict between possessive Consular official and his lonely son. Some sensitive playing (Michael Hordern, Dirk Bogarde) and direction (Philip Leacock) hampered by melodramatic contrivances towards the end. *Reviewed.* (Jon Whiteley, VistaVision, Technicolor.)

TEENAGE REBEL (*Fox*) Lush American middle-class family drama about the rehabilitation of a problem daughter. Emotionally synthetic, with some incidental sociological interest. (Ginger Rogers, Michael Rennie, Betty Lou Keim; director, Edmund Goulding. CinemaScope, black-and-white.)

THAT CERTAIN FEELING (*Paramount*) Cheerful comedy adapted from a Broadway success, with a return to form by Bob Hope as a neurotic strip-cartoonist. (Eva Marie Saint, George Sanders; directors, Norman Panama and Melvin Frank. VistaVision, Technicolor.)

TIGER IN THE SMOKE (*JARFID*) Margery Allingham's story of search for buried treasure by gang of war veterans led by a psychopathic sergeant. Promising beginning in a foggy London; less satisfactory denouement. (Tony Wright, Donald Sinden, Muriel Pavlow; director, Roy Baker.)

THREE VIOLENT PEOPLE (*Paramount*) Wild Western about conflict between two brothers and the dance-hall girl who marries one of them. Excellent VistaVision exteriors by Loyal Griggs. (Charlton Heston, Anne Baxter; director, Rudolph Mate. Eastman Colour.)

UP IN THE WORLD (*JARFID*) Norman Wisdom as a window-cleaner put upon by the idle and ill-natured rich. The comedy of social embarrassment is rather a matter of taste. (Maureen Swanson; director, John Paddy Carstairs.)

WAR AND PEACE (*A.B.-Pathé*) Italian-produced, American-directed, internationally-cast adaptation of Tolstoy. Some impressive spectacle in the second half, but the novel not unexpectedly defies translation. *Reviewed.* (Audrey Hepburn, Henry Fonda, Mel Ferrer; director, King Vidor. Vista-Vision, Technicolor.)

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